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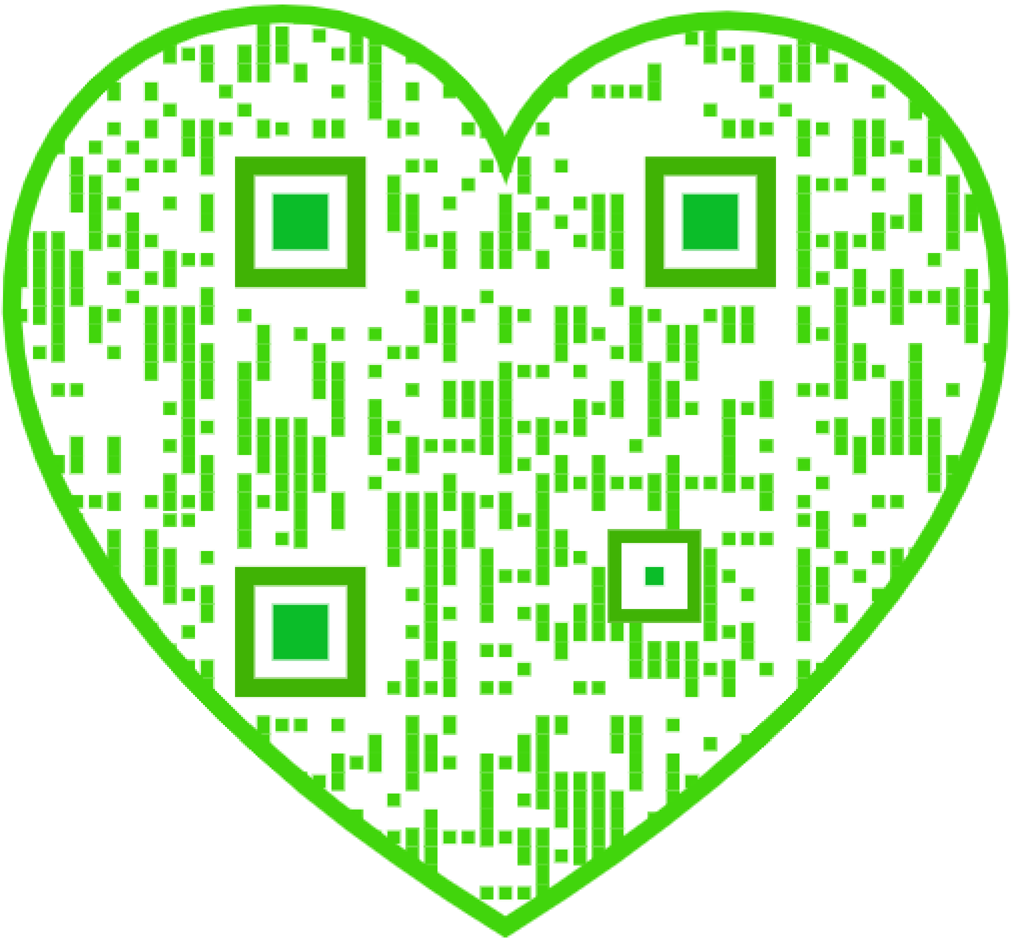

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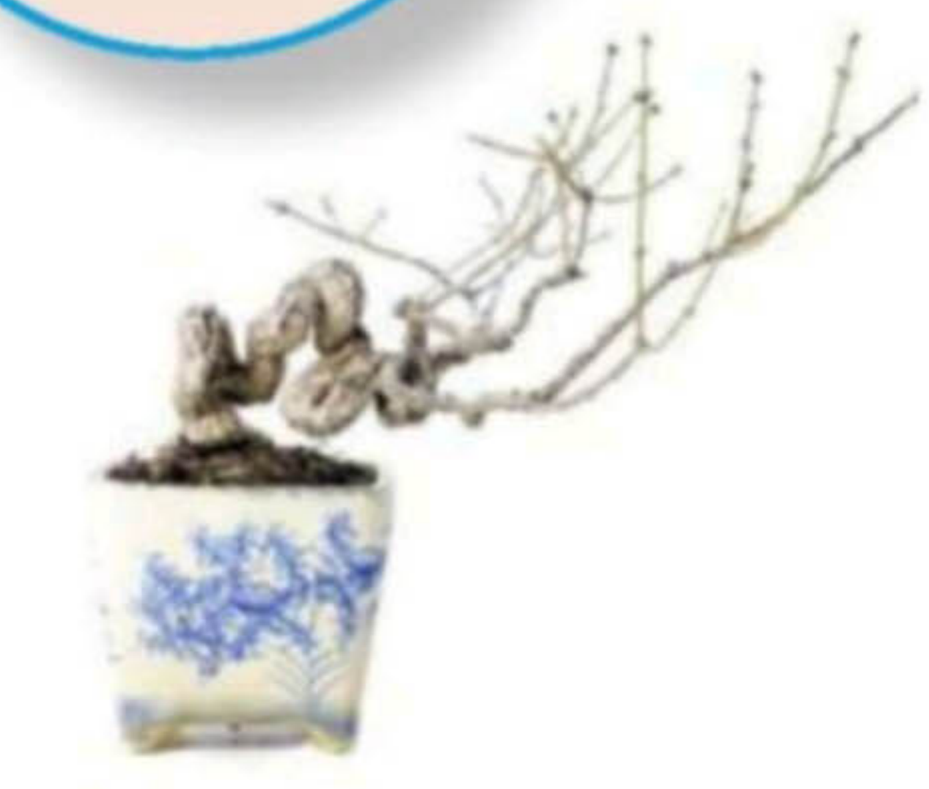

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Carpinus coreana,
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Nebari 24cm,
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Carpinus coreana
36 cm, ± 40 years
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Translations:
Peter Warren

KINBON

Going retro

The biggest show in Europe, The Trophy, celebrated its silver jubilee this spring. It all began as a fairly small event with just a few rows of bonsai on display and some trade stands in the small side hall of the Muse Theatre in Houthalen, Belgium. We all had to cram into an even smaller room to see demonstrations by the big stars of that time, like Hotsumi Terakawa, Kevin Willson, Salvatore Liporace and last, but by no means least, Marc Nöelanders. I remember us having our promotion stand in the actors'canteen, where sandwiches and drinks were served for the visitors. It was a very smokey place because there were no smoking restrictions at that time. As a non-smoker, it was quite a burden to stand all day in the smoke. But who cares? It was a great show and exciting. Now, 25 years later, how fast things have changed in the bonsai community. What had seemed almost impossible then, has become reality now. Bonsai is firmly rooted and even attracting the younger generation as well.

A little more recently, five years ago to be exact, Ryan Neil did a remarkable demo for us, carried out straight after The Trophy. Bonsai Plaza had selected a large garden juniper ready for Ryan to work on in our studio. Thanks to his genius, an impossible tree was made into something totally stunning. When Ryan was invited back for the jubilee edition, we seized this unique opportunity to let him work on that same juniper for the second time, so that he could take it to the next level. This time the work was carried out live on stage with flashback images of the action five years ago, projected on a large screen, thereby making past and present blend together.

It all seems so logical. Looking back on the development of a bonsai is so much part of this fascinating art form.

Enjoy the read

Farrand Bloch
Chief editor

Our Icons

- *Video available bonsaifocus.com*
- *Scan the code with your phone*
- *Beginner*
- *Advanced*
- *Expert*

On the cover

Mountain maple, *Acer palmatum*.
Owner: Andrea Meriggioli

Photo: Bonsai Focus Studio

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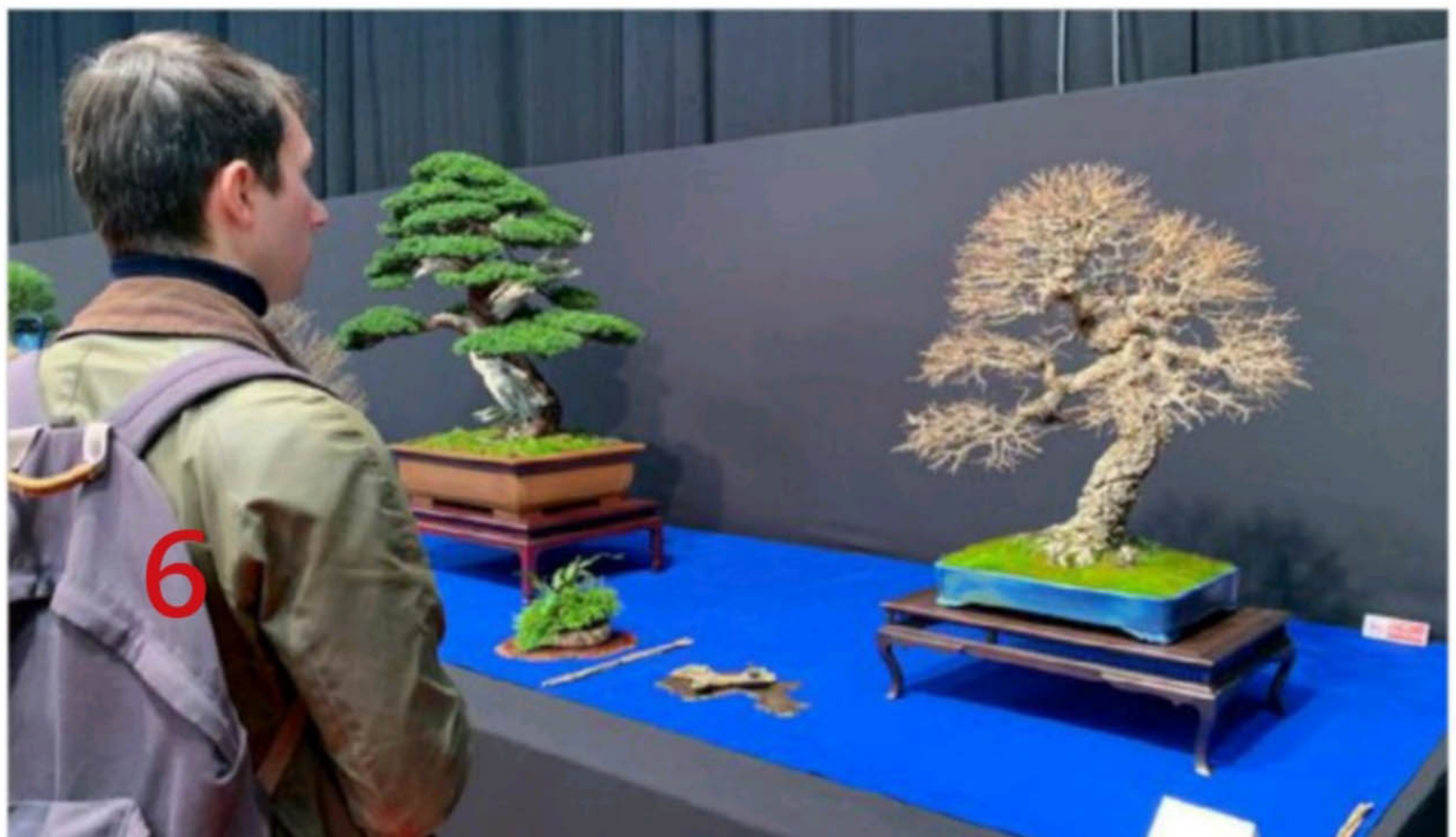
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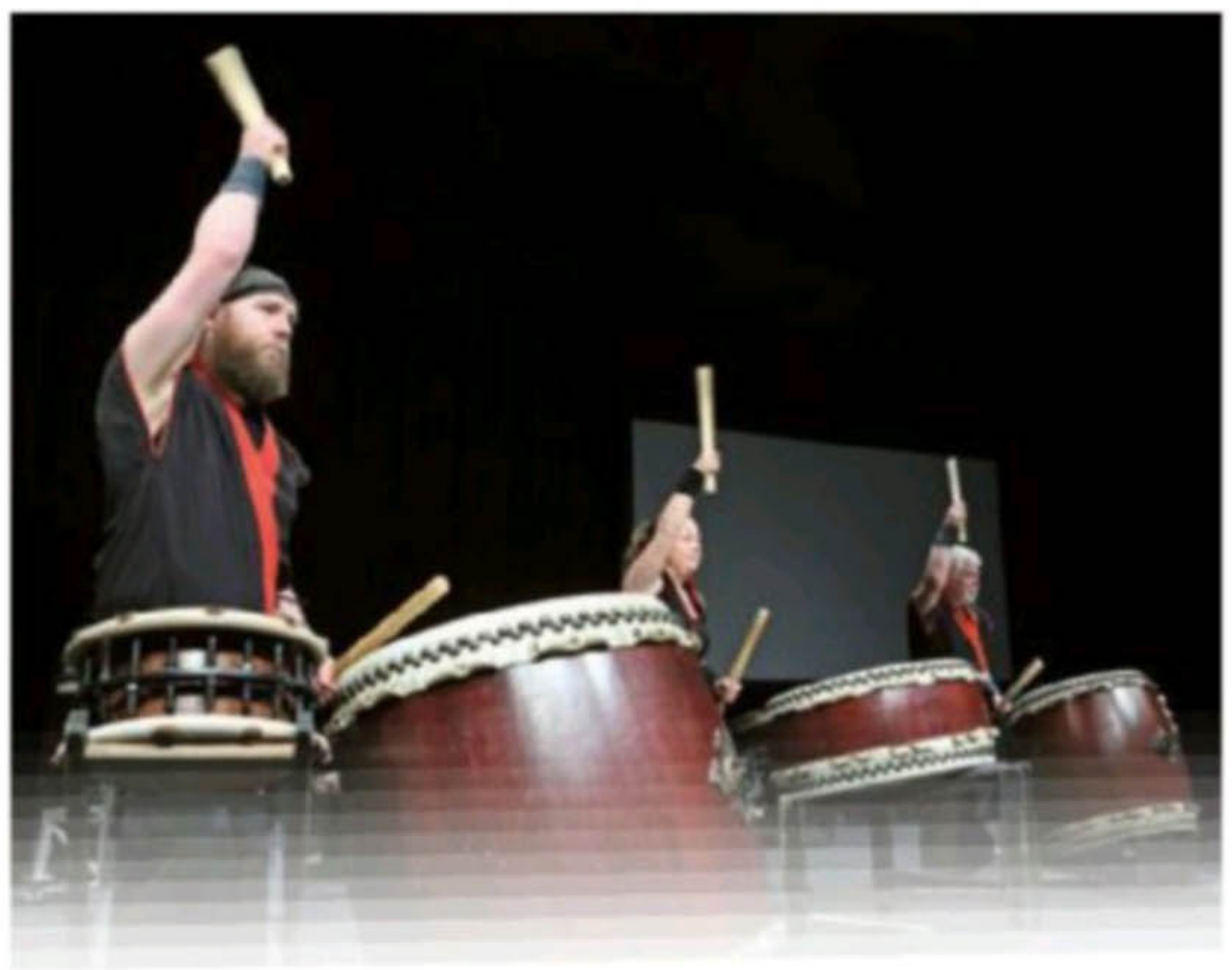
Bonsai Plaza

THE 25TH TROPHY

A quarter century of bonsai art in Europe

Text: Edwin Koppers and Manon Jamin (Made Bonsai Pots) Photography: Bonsai Focus Studio, Jan Dieryck and Yan LB

Last February, the Limburghal in Genk was the setting for a special milestone in the European bonsai world: the 25th edition of The Trophy. This anniversary event, under the wings of the Belgium Bonsai Association Belgium, attracted bonsai enthusiasts from far and wide. Edwin Koppers and Manon Jamin describe the event



The Trophy was inaugurated on the Friday afternoon with a ceremony that did justice to the Japanese origins of the art of bonsai: taiko drums, koto music and the traditional breaking of a barrel of sake.

The anniversary event was distinguished by a special ceramics project. Five bonsai potters, including Claudia Wagner, Klika, Sabine Besnard, Roald Vlems and we two from Made Bonsai Pots, each produced 50 numbered anniversary pots. These 250 exclusive pieces found their way to exhibition participants, among others, as lasting memories.

At eight o'clock on Saturday, dozens of visitors were already waiting patiently in line in the rain. When the doors opened at nine o'clock, the hall flooded with eager bonsai enthusiasts, on the hunt for that one (pre)bonsai and other related products, offered by no fewer than 100 traders.

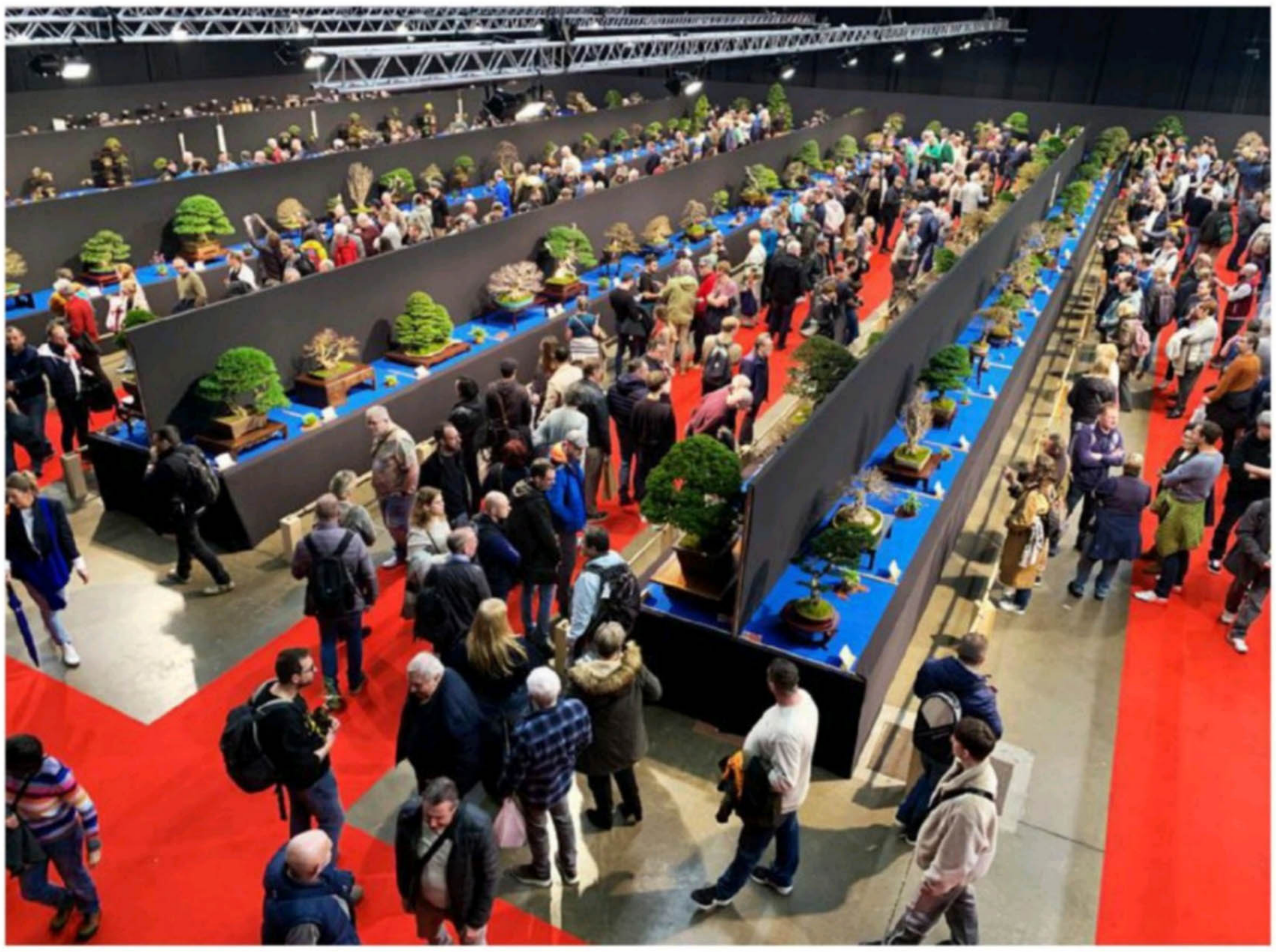
The elegant Japanese garden at the entrance. It was designed by Patrick de Zwart of Kuro-Seki

Exhibitions and demonstrations

The exhibition was of an exceptional standard. The international entries showed an impressive range of diversity and craftsmanship. Along the side wall there was a separate exhibition entirely dedicated to the Yose-Ue style, for which a special prize had been established. The collections of Alda Clijsters and Danny Use contributed to the artistic level of this edition.

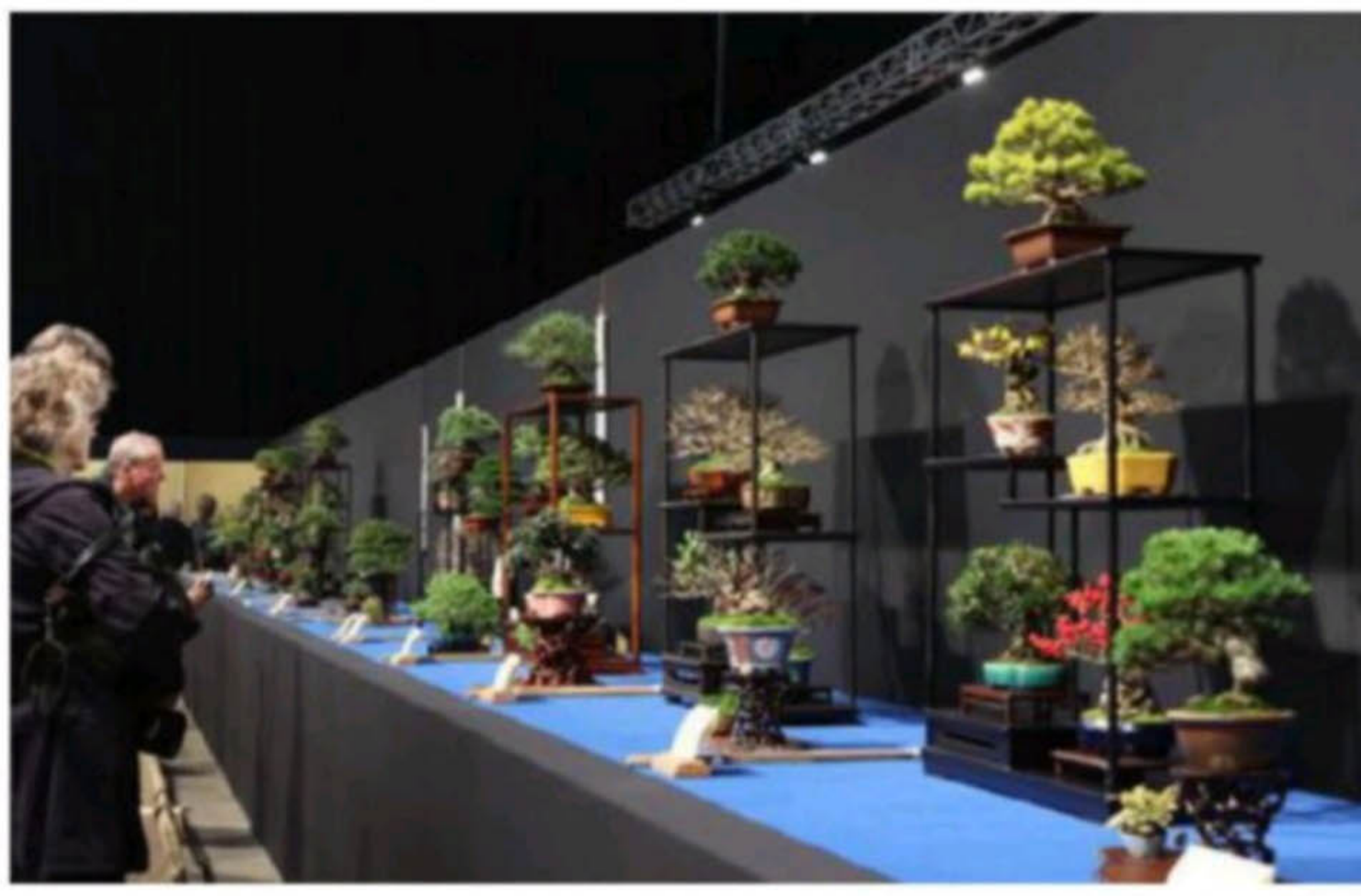
Demonstrations were a central element of this show. Jelle Ferwerda did a great job hosting the impressive demos by Ryan Neil (US), Koji Hiramatsu (Japan) and Mauro Stemberger (Italy) who shared their expertise over two days in a packed theatre. There was a good interaction, led by Jelle, between Masters and audience. Many interesting discussions were held in response to the enthusiastic speaker, Ryan Neil.

In addition to bonsai, space was provided for related art forms. The presentations of international ceramists and suiseki added a valuable feature. The European Bonsai Potter Collective showed the wealth of contemporary bonsai ceramics.



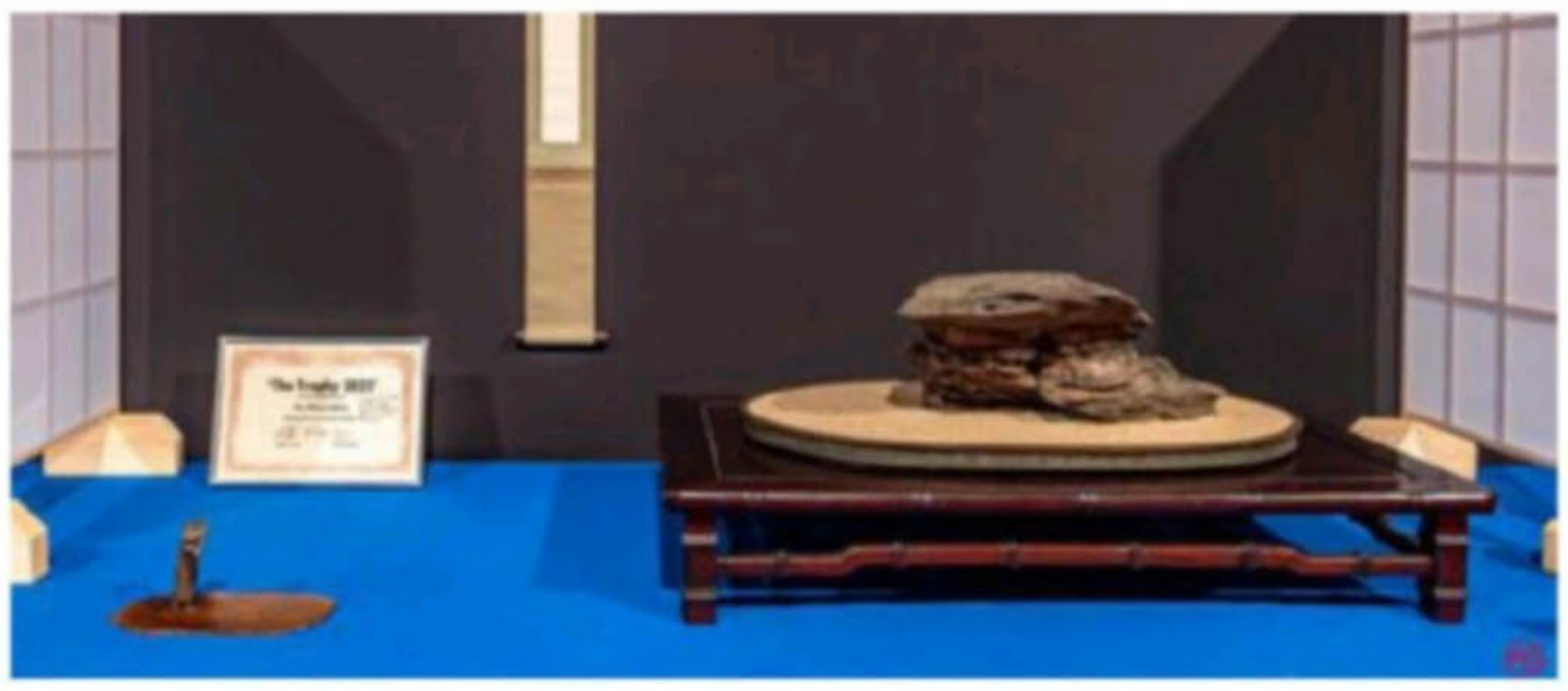
German Manfred Mutz impressed the audience with his 'Lord of the rings' floating rock planting

Mauro Stemberger at work on a massive Scots pine



The Shohin section

“ It's Europe's Kokufu-Ten



The best suiseki at The Trophy 2025: ‘Living in the world, as Sögi says, means sheltering from the winter downpour.' Shelter stone

The Saturday evening dinner, with award ceremony, again brought the community together. The first prize in the shohin category went to Bob van Ruitenbeek. Alejandro Izquierdo won the Kifu bonsai category with a juniper. Andres Alvarez Iglesias won the first prize for conifers with a *Taxus baccata*, Valentino Villecco won the category for deciduous trees with an *Acer buergerianum*.

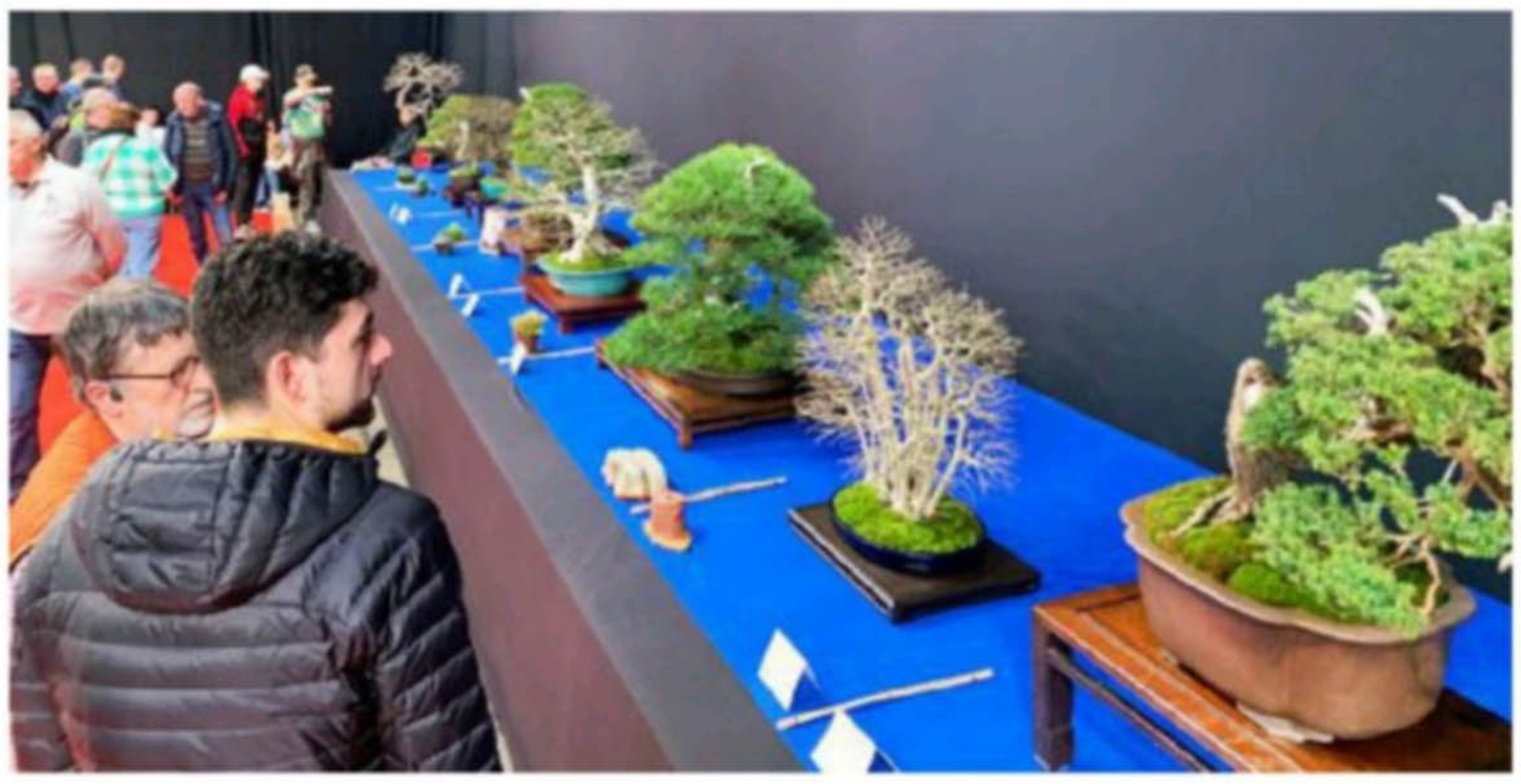
Encounters and impressions

In 25 years, The Trophy has developed into a leading event in Europe. The solid organization has contributed to this. The event also functions as a notable meeting place where knowledge is shared and the development of bonsai as an art form becomes visible.

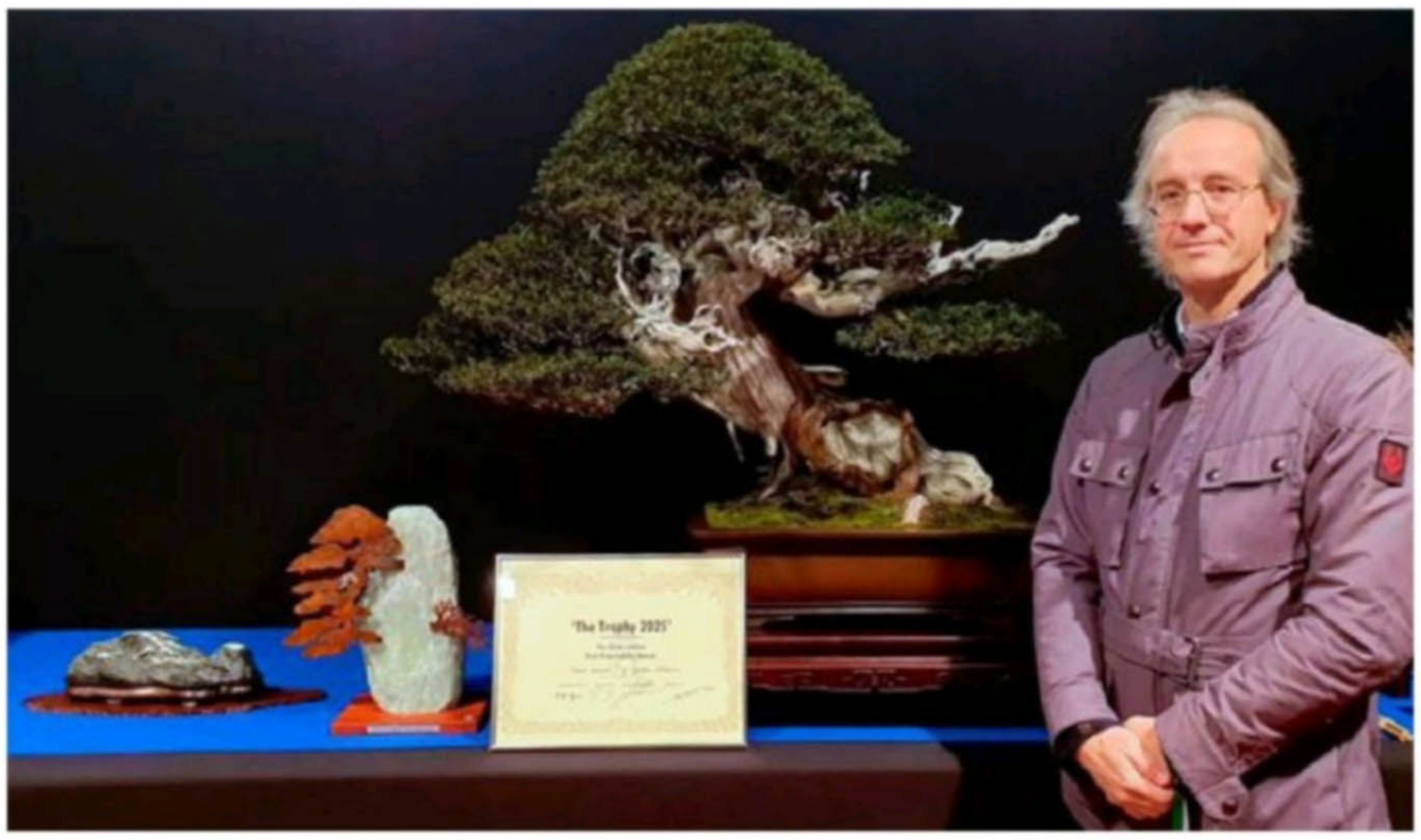
We can look back on three intensive, but satisfying days. The Trophy remains an event that brings together and inspires the bonsai world. It was a privilege to be part of this anniversary celebration and we are already looking forward to the next edition of this special event, where we can look forward to bonsai Master Shinji Suzuki and his son Hiroaki from Japan who'll be present as demonstrators.

Above left: Ryan Neil in action
Above right: Koji Hiramatsu and Jelle Ferweda answering questions from the audience. while Luca Tamburello assists

Left: Holger Göbel was responsible for selecting and arranging the high-quality Suiseki Below: an even larger pot section at The Trophy



In the exhibition area, all displayed bonsai were carefully arranged and selected by Danny Use, ensuring a smooth and elegant alternation of the compositions



Andres Alvarez with his winning yew.

> ***Being selected to participate in The Trophy is an award in itself***

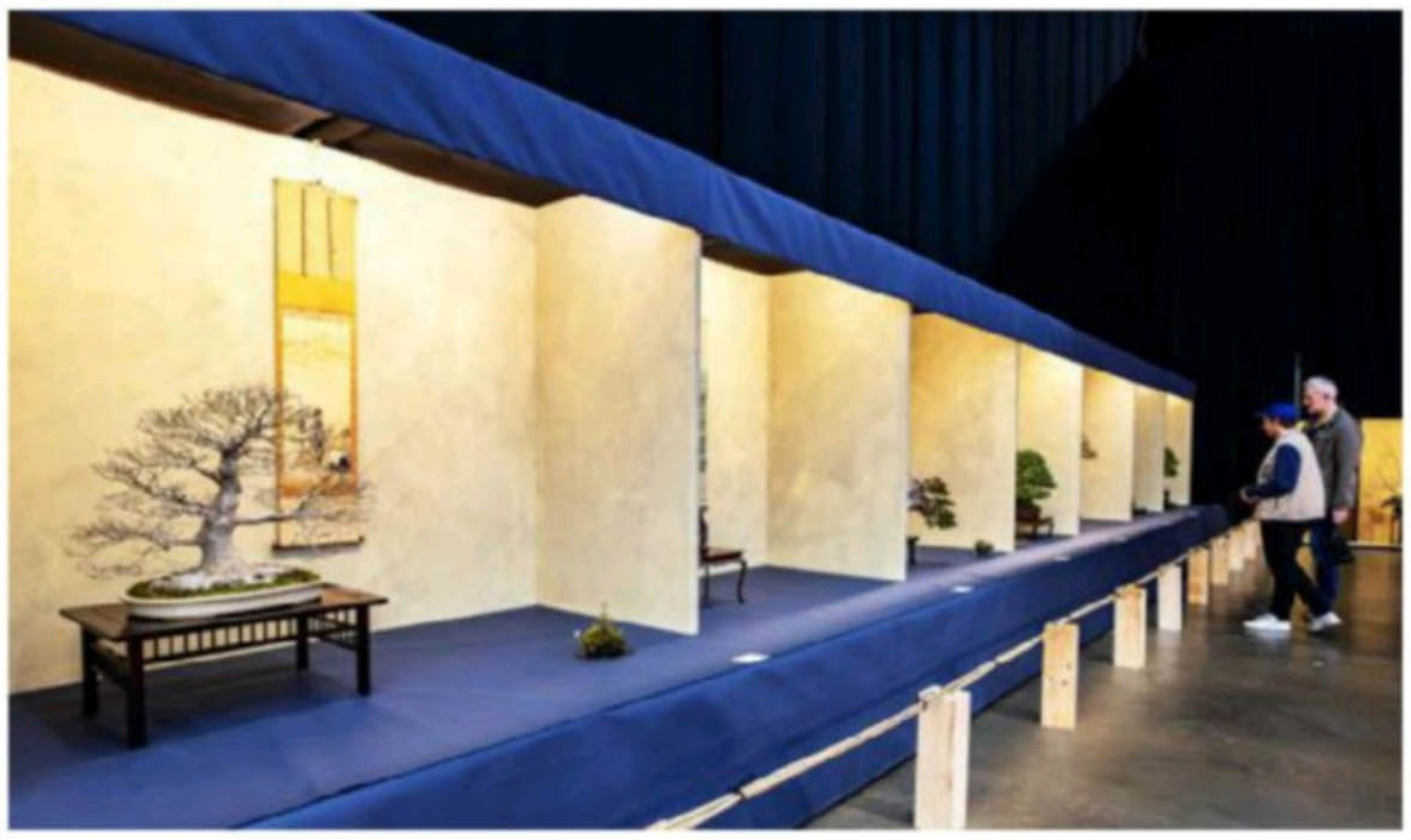
Special pot project

Five potters from neighboring countries, each of whom had crafted fifty hand-made pots to order, were invited on to the stage to present their work: Klika-Kuratkova Czech Republic, Made Bonsai Pots, the Netherlands, Sabine Besnard from France, Claudi-Schalen from Germany, and Roald Vlems, Studio Tebineri, Belgium.

These pots were given to each exhibitor of bonsai, suiseki, or pots. A valuable memento of their participation in the 25th Trophy.

The many volunteers and everyone who made an event like The Trophy possible were thanked most sincerely for all their support and cooperation.

A line-up of seven Tokonoma from Nippon Bonsai Sakka Kyookai Europe, featuring outstanding bonsai and Suiseki.



THE TROPHY AWARDS

Best deciduous
Acer buergerianum: Valentino Villecco

Best composition (FBBC Certificate)
Pseudocydonia: Lydie Carpentier

Best conifer
Taxus baccata: Andres Alvarez

Conifer nomination, UBE Award
Taxus baccata: Riccardo Vinciguerra

Kifu winner
Juniperus chinensis 'Itoigawa': Alejandro Izquierdo

Winner rock planting
Juniperus chinensis 'itoigawa': Alexandre Escudero

Shohin winner
Bob Van Ruitenbeek

Best tree of BAB
(Bonsai Association Belgium)
Ginkgo biloba: Chris Pieterse

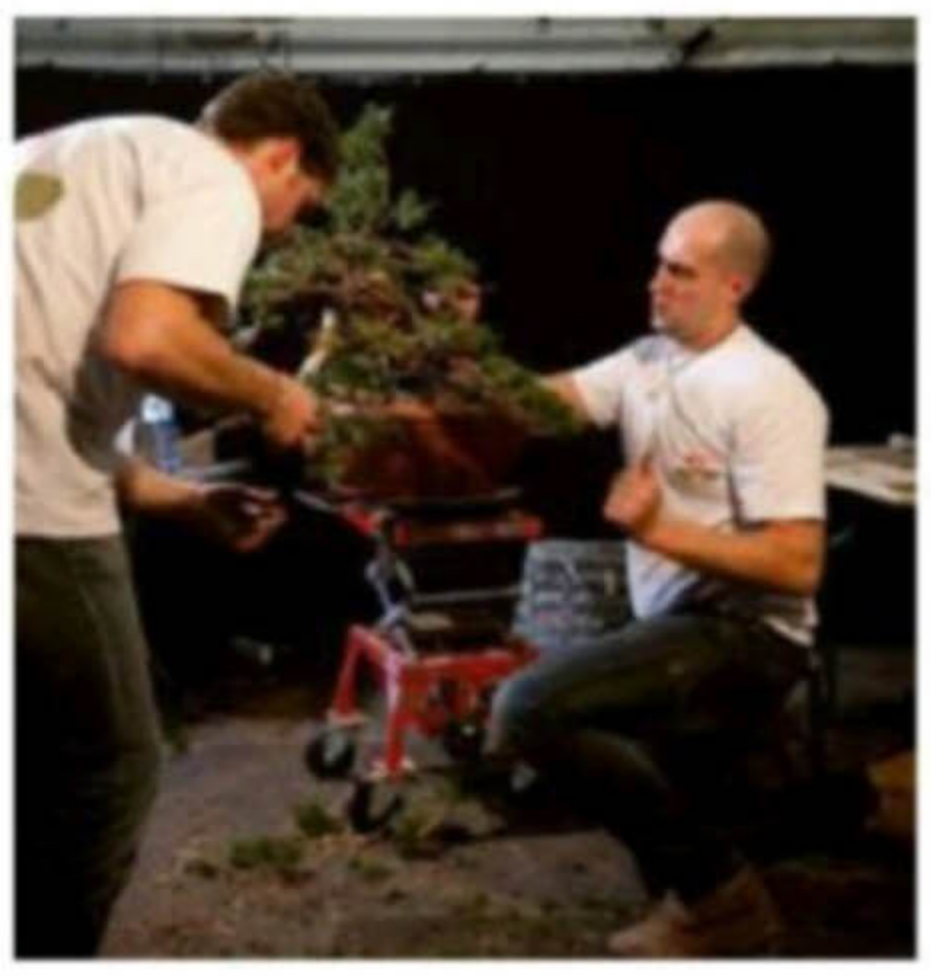
A flashback

The Trophy grew from a tiny seedling to a massive tree

Text and photography: Bonsai Focus Studio

The Trophy started as a relatively small event. It all began in 1999, when the Bonsai Association Belgium was founded. A year later, together with Marc Nöelanders, the first Nöelanders Trophy was held in 'Muse' Cultural centre in Heusden Zolder. Only a limited space was rented, but soon it grew into a show featuring bonsai of international stature and many bonsai artists who would love to perform their demonstration at this event. So, more space could be rented and demos were carried out in the theatre hall.
That venue became too small to host the show, so a new venue was found on an old mining site of Heusden-Zolder. There it expanded further. During that time, it had already become one of Europe's major shows. Later in 2015 it went even bigger, a large expo centre that includes a big theatre for the demos, large hall for the bonsai show and even more spacious halls for the expanded bonsai trade fair. Nor must we forget the development of quality bonsai at the expo. It really has become Europe's Kokufu-Ten.

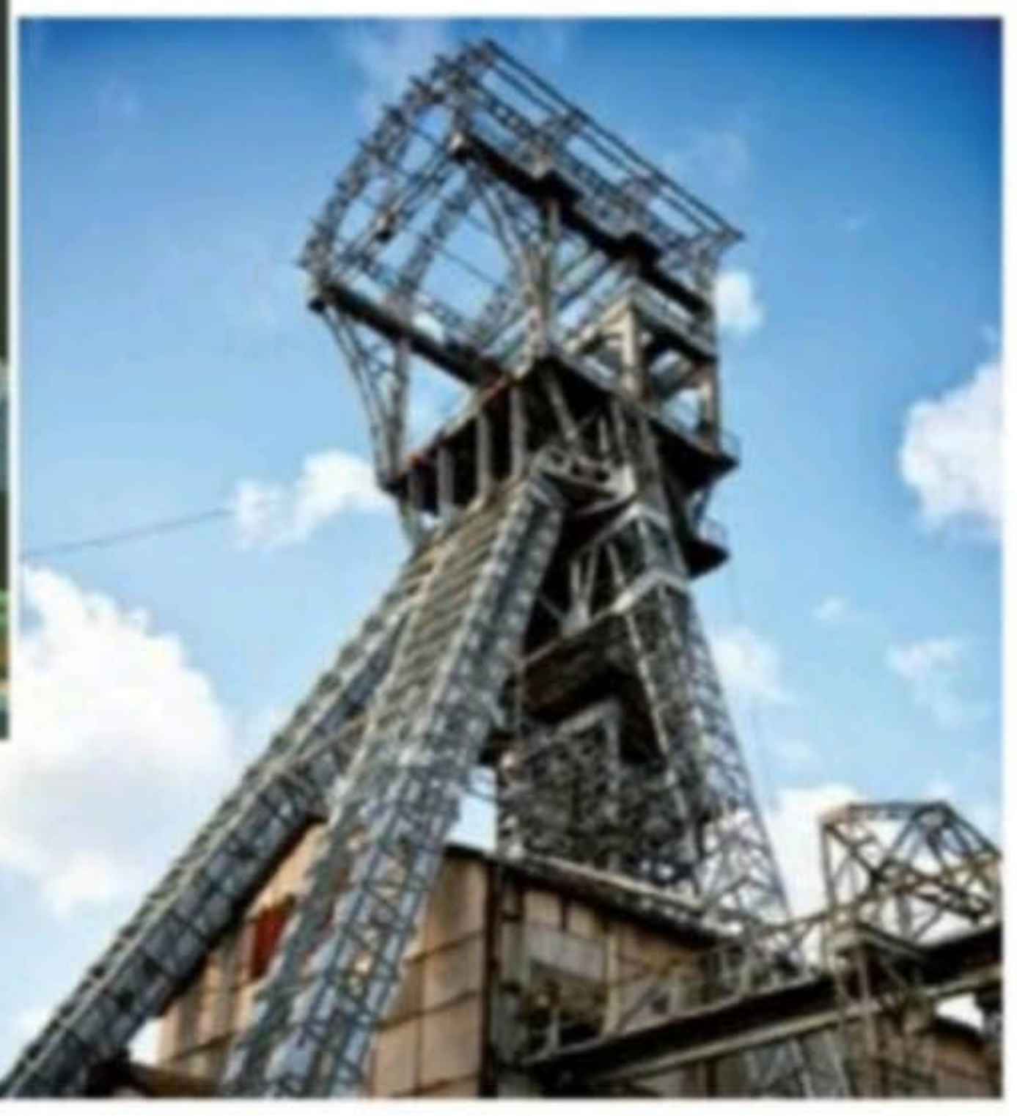
2004: A special display in a Japanese garden setting



Demo by Mauro Stemberger in 2012

2015: The larger venue situated on an old mining site

2003: Demo with Kevin Willson and Adriano Bonini (background)



The Nöelanders Trophy in 2013

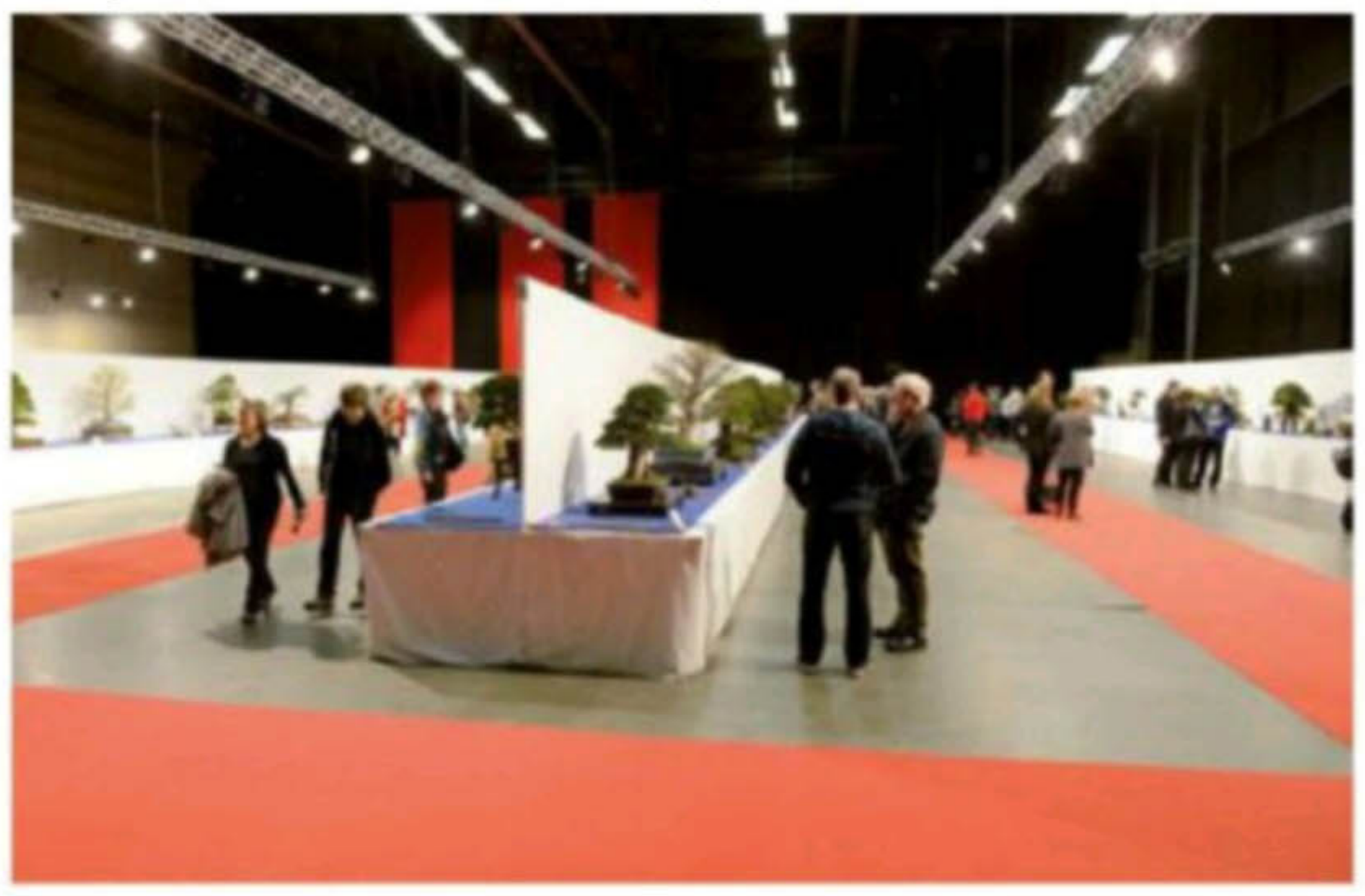
Ryan Neil's demo at the Nöelanders Trophy in 2012

Best of 20 yea
Korean Dre

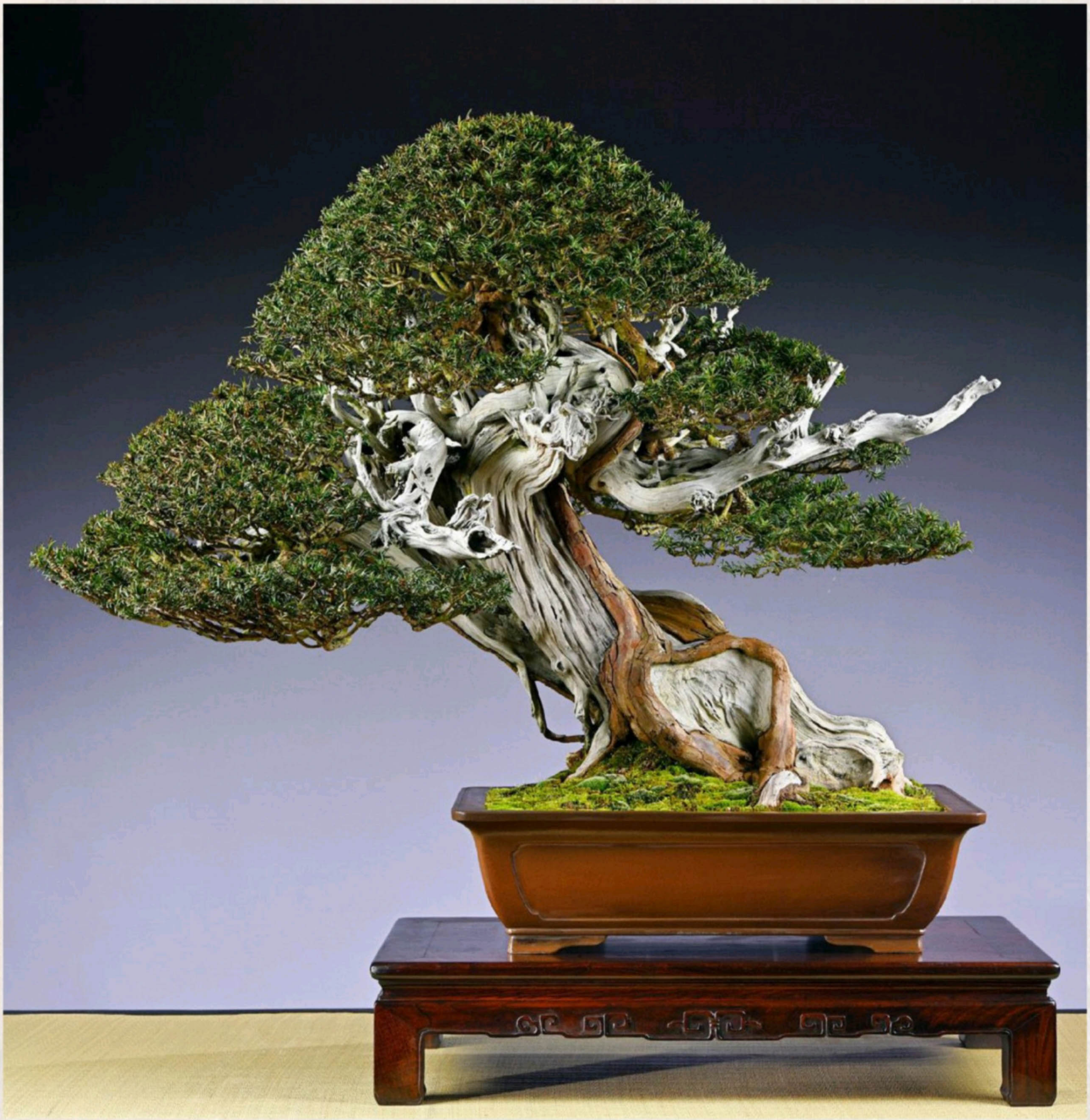
The Korean Dream Team in action in 2019

2005: The white display

The first time at the Limburghal in Genk in 2015



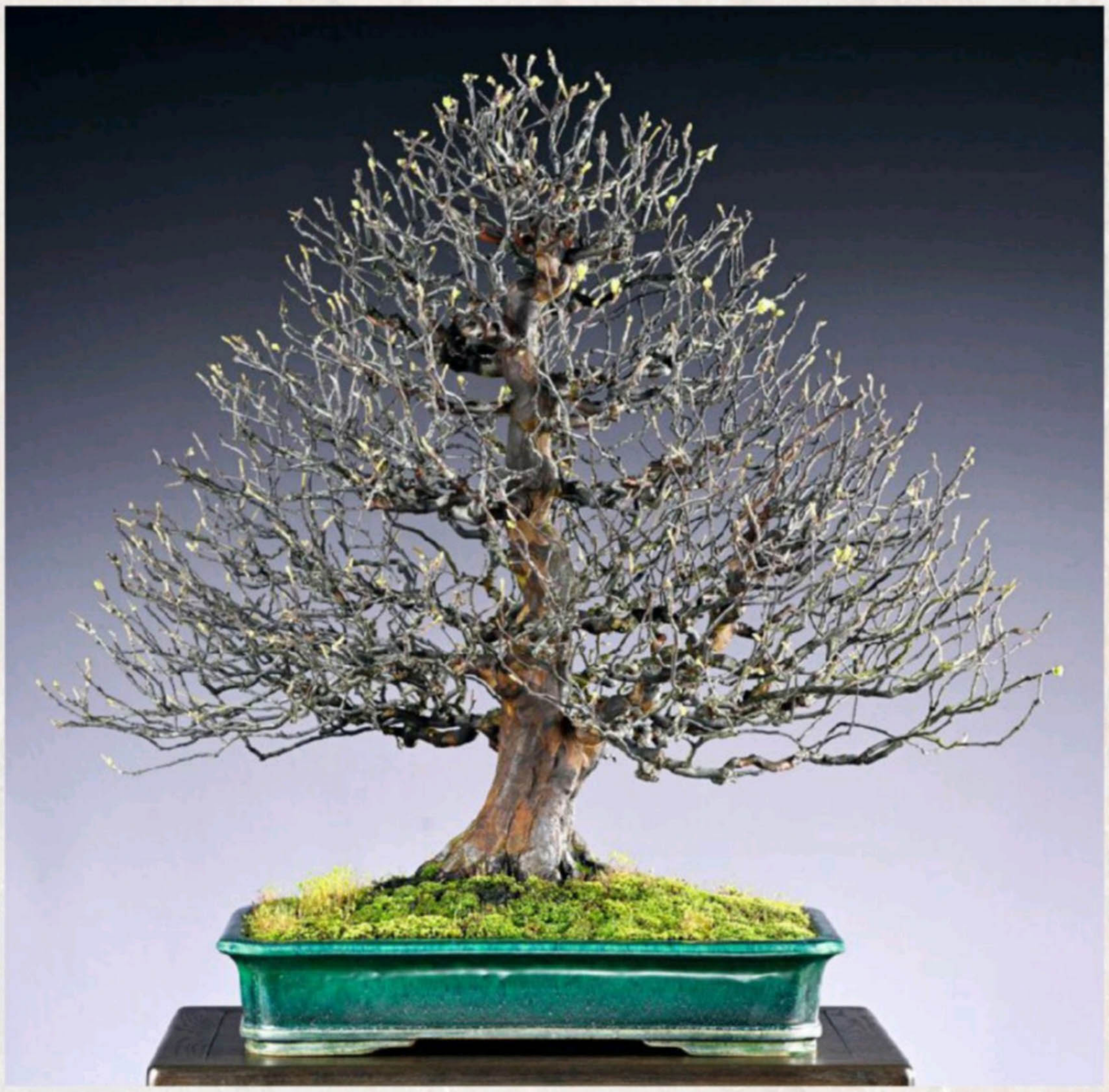
THE 25TH TROPHY



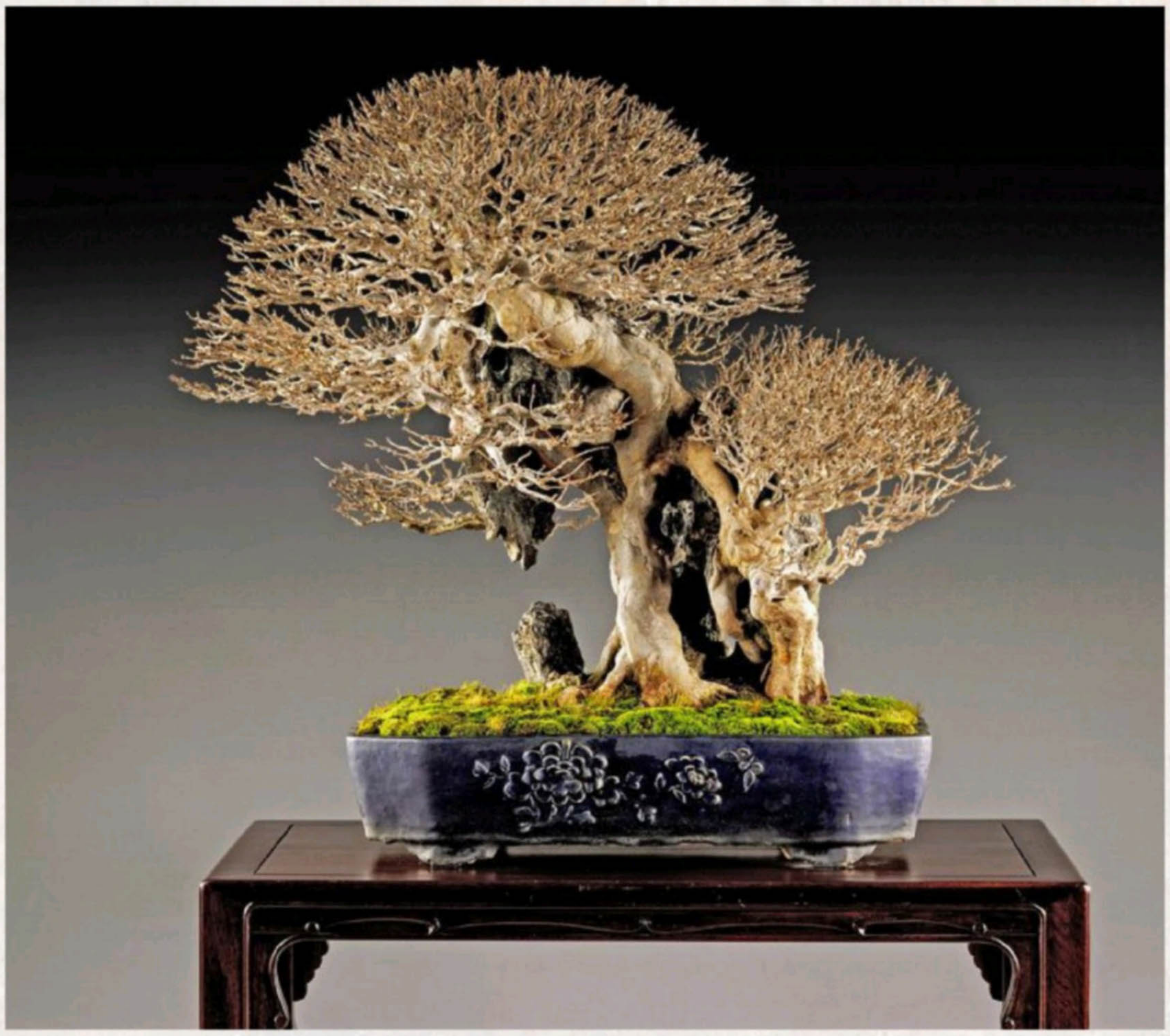
Photos: Jörg Derlien, Willy Evenepoel, Jan Dieryk

Best conifer

Taxus baccata: Andres Alvarez



Best composition **(FBBC Certificate)**
Pseudocydonia: Lydie Carpentier

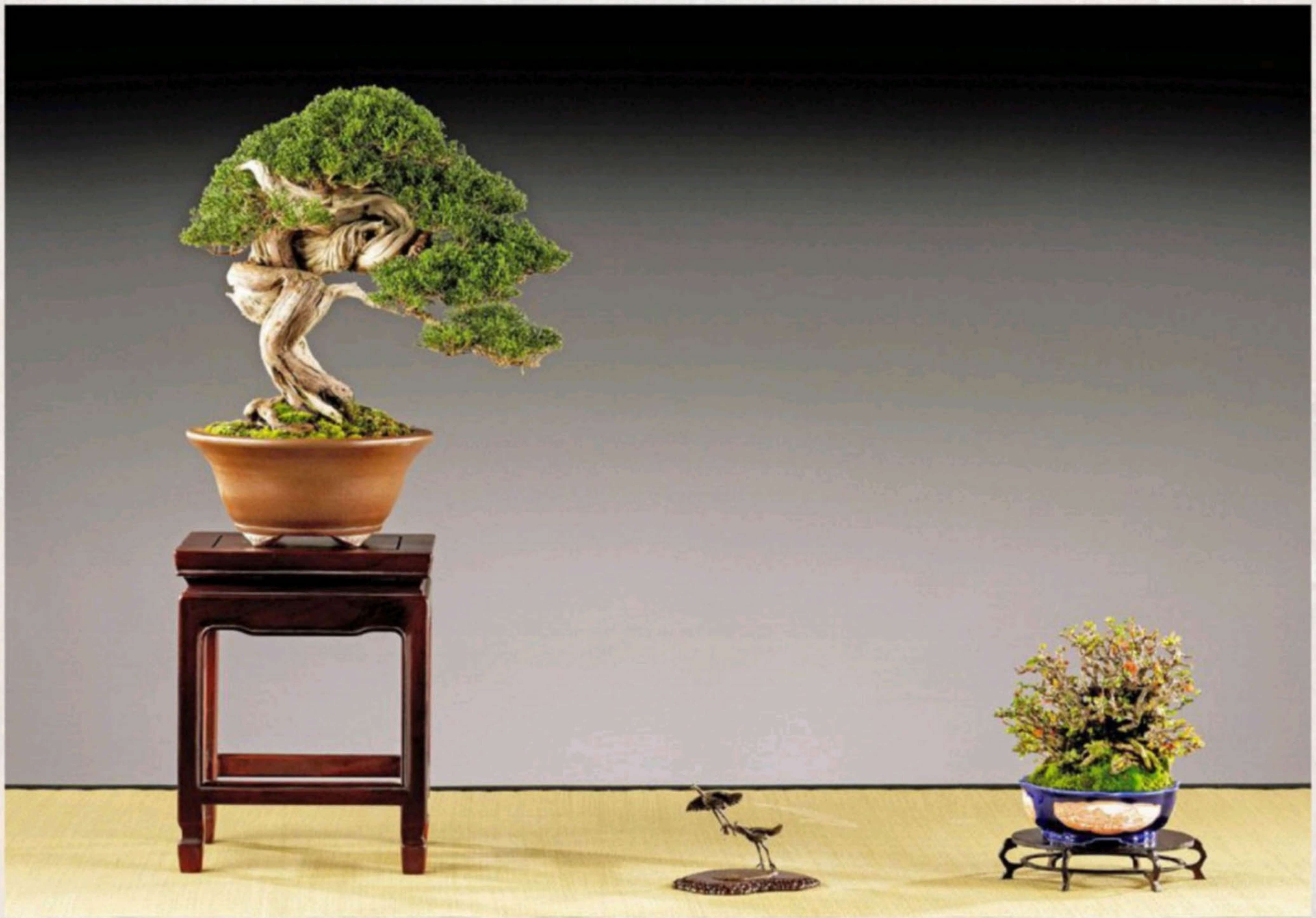


Best deciduous

Acer buergerianum: Valentino Villecco

Kifu winner

Juniperus chinensis 'Itoigawa': Alejandro Izquierdo



Photos: Jörg Derlien, Willy Evenepoel

TIME TOOK ITS COURSE

37 years in the life of a little mugo created by François Jeker

Text and photography: François Jeker

With our small trees, we're always a little too impatient and we'd like to have a perfect bonsai very quickly. But our time is not the same as that of a tree. They can live for hundreds of years. We, by comparison, are just passing through. We are therefore condemned to bend to the life rhythm of our trees — and obey them. At the same time, we are preparing to pass the baton to another who will take over the work when we are no longer able

We often proudly display the result of a first shaping of a yamadori. However, pride may be distorted by our ego. In reality, a significant part of the creation has already been carried out by nature, which has formed the singularity and beauty of the yamadori. It is after the first shaping, that real work begins. It will be necessary to care for it with affection so that it is always in the best condition and shape. It needs to improve its branch setting, gradual structural pruning, wire it again, sometimes completely change the initial design, because the tree will grow as it wants to, and not necessarily comply with what we have in mind.

Our job is to observe the tree, modestly and humbly, to understand how it grows, to understand the information it gives us so that we can guide it towards maturity. If, against its will, we impose a project and rate of growth it cannot tolerate, we will pay the price and the tree may die.

1988

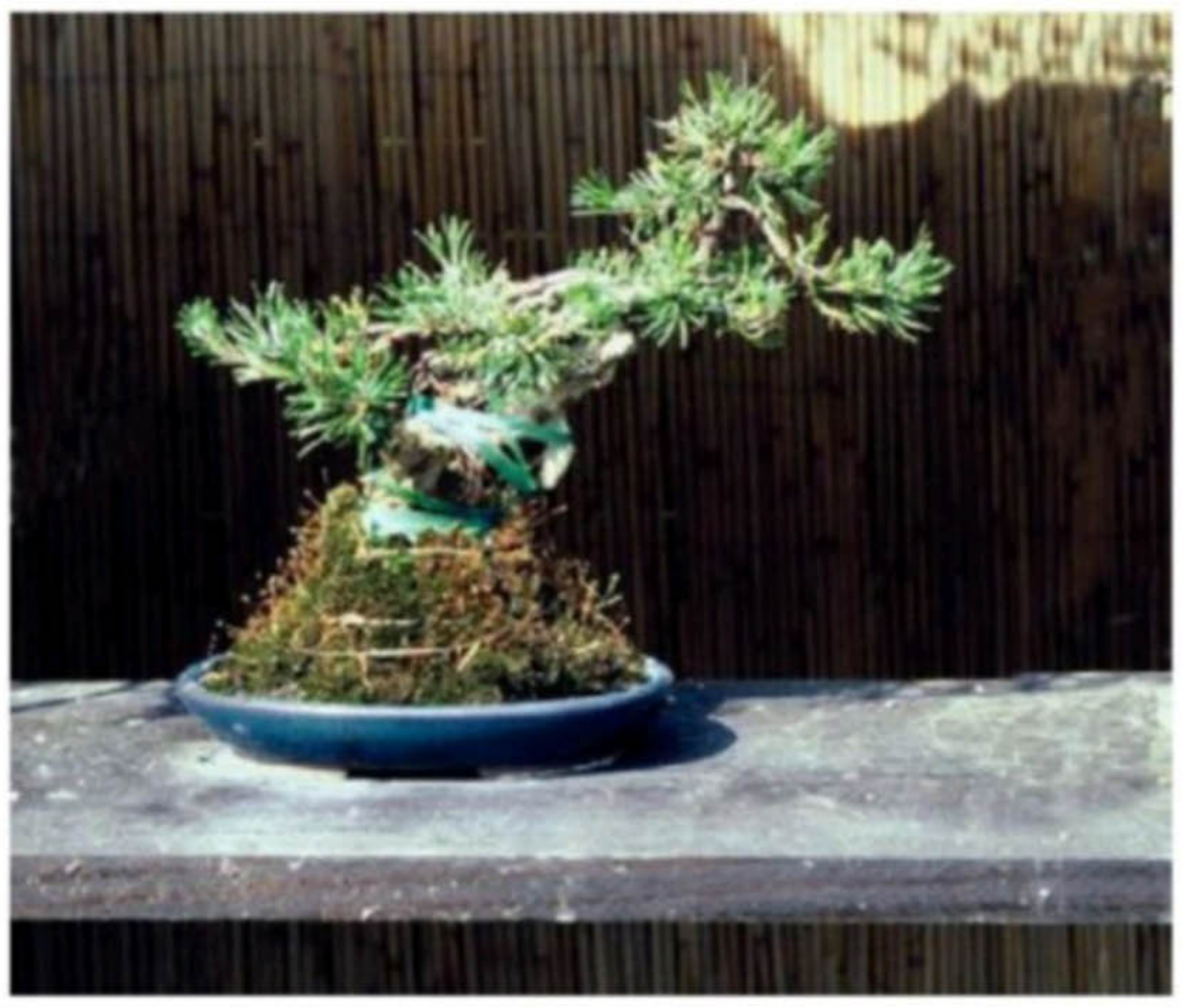
It was André Montagne, a bonsai pioneer in France, who gave me a small mugo shoot in the spring of 1988. I had been looking for a small pine in order to test the creation of a pine on rock.

The very first start

After three years' preparation to lengthen the roots, I attached the tree to a rock, protecting the roots with some moss held together with string, and wired the mugo to at least place the branches in the right position. The idea was to visually use the rock as a trunk, because the roots and trunk weren't big enough.

Here is the result in spring 1991. It doesn't look like much yet

1991

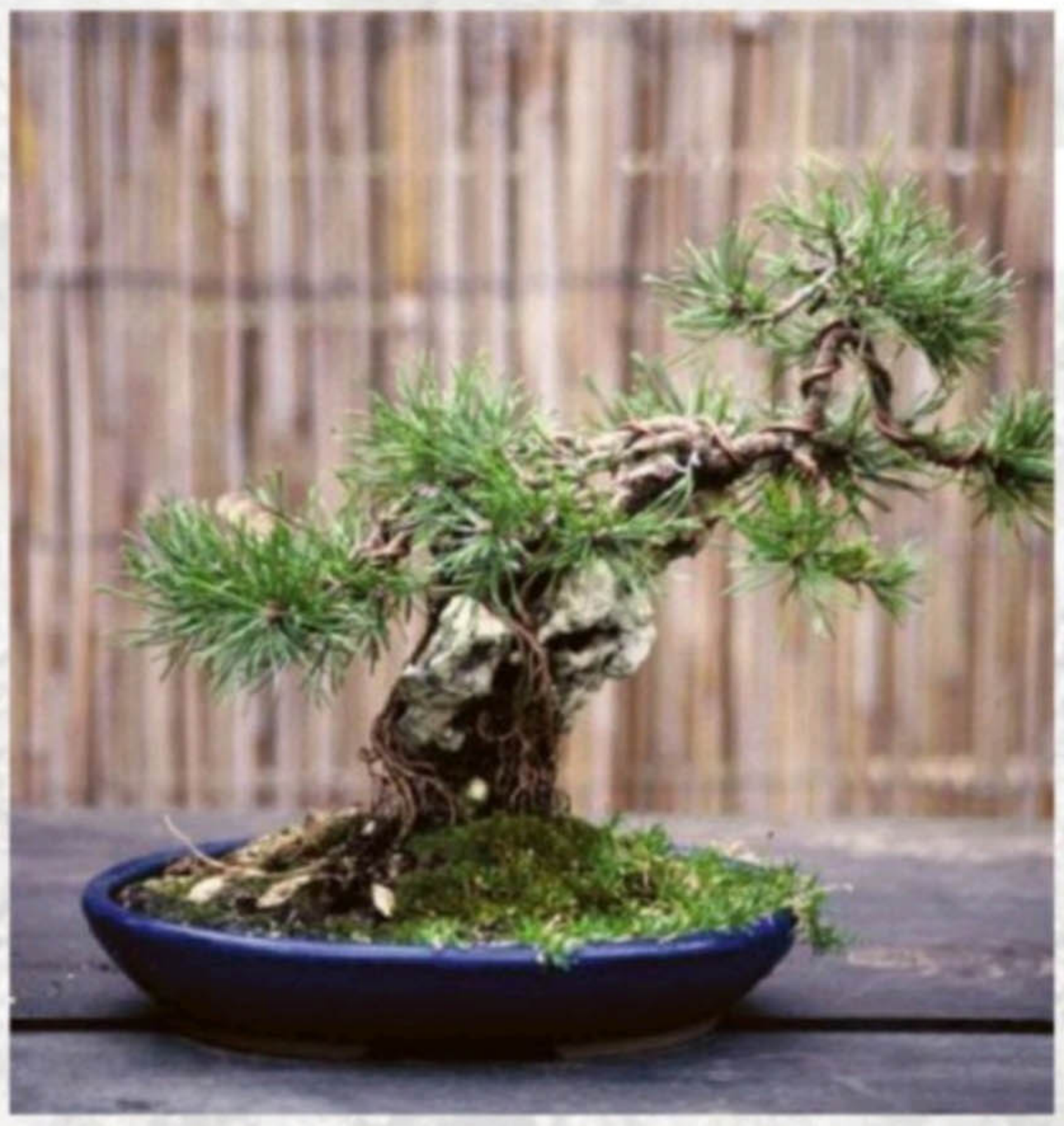


André Montagne as he walks through his fields

French pioneer

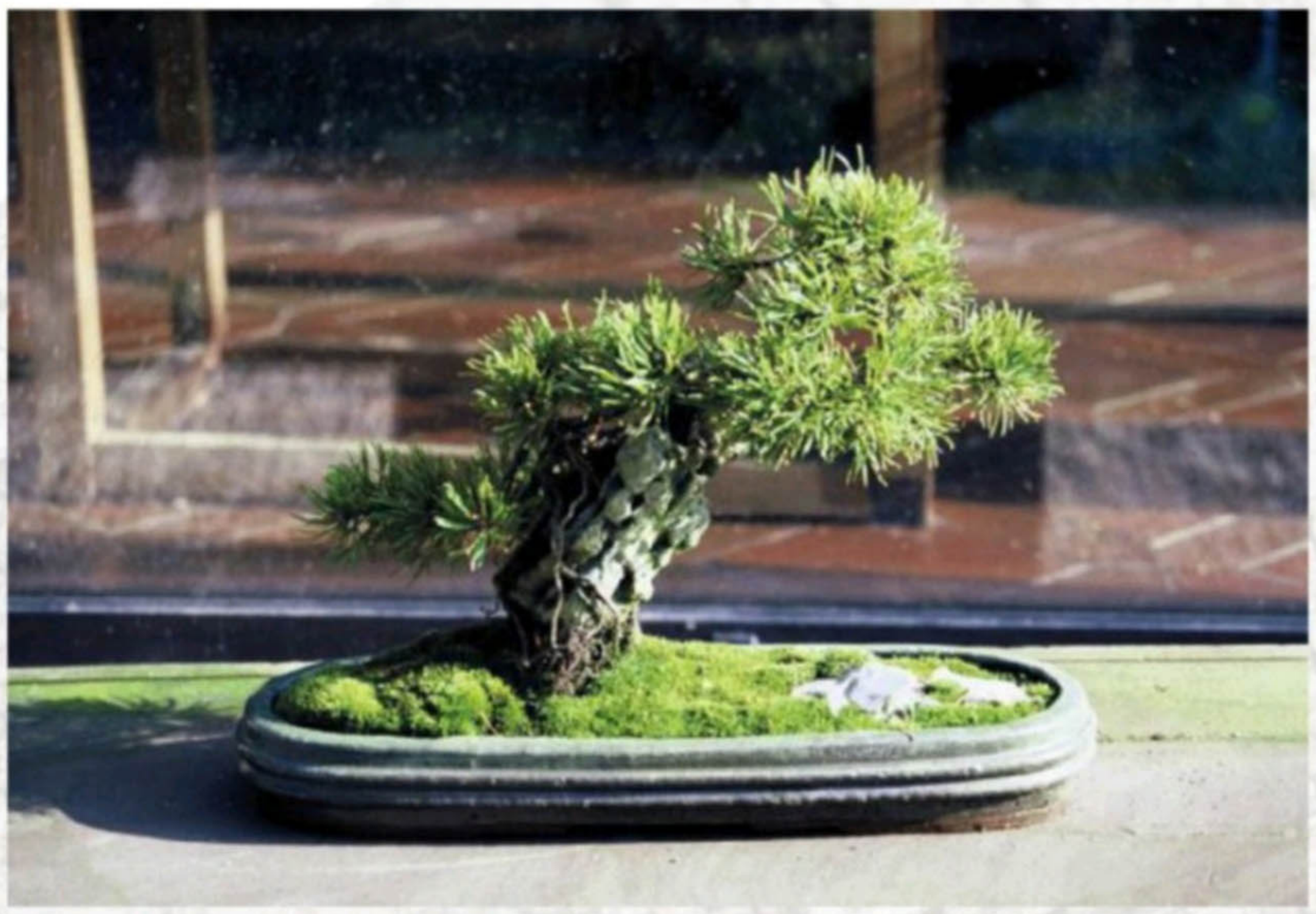
André Montagne was an engaging man, who had an encyclopaedic knowledge of botany. He was the first to produce pre-bonsai on a large scale using native varieties.
He had two passions. The first was 'French bonsai'. He'd rather be inspired by the shape of the trees in his region, the Drôme, than by Japanese bonsai. He used to say: 'We have to invent French bonsai'.
His second, he claimed that in every landscape you could find a stone that was an exact miniature reproduction of its natural environment. The same applied to trees. It was his way of emphasising the importance of the search for naturalness and authenticity.

1992



One year later, the tree hadn't suffered from the planting. I let it grow freely and gradually removed the moss at the base to expose the roots to the air and sun

1993

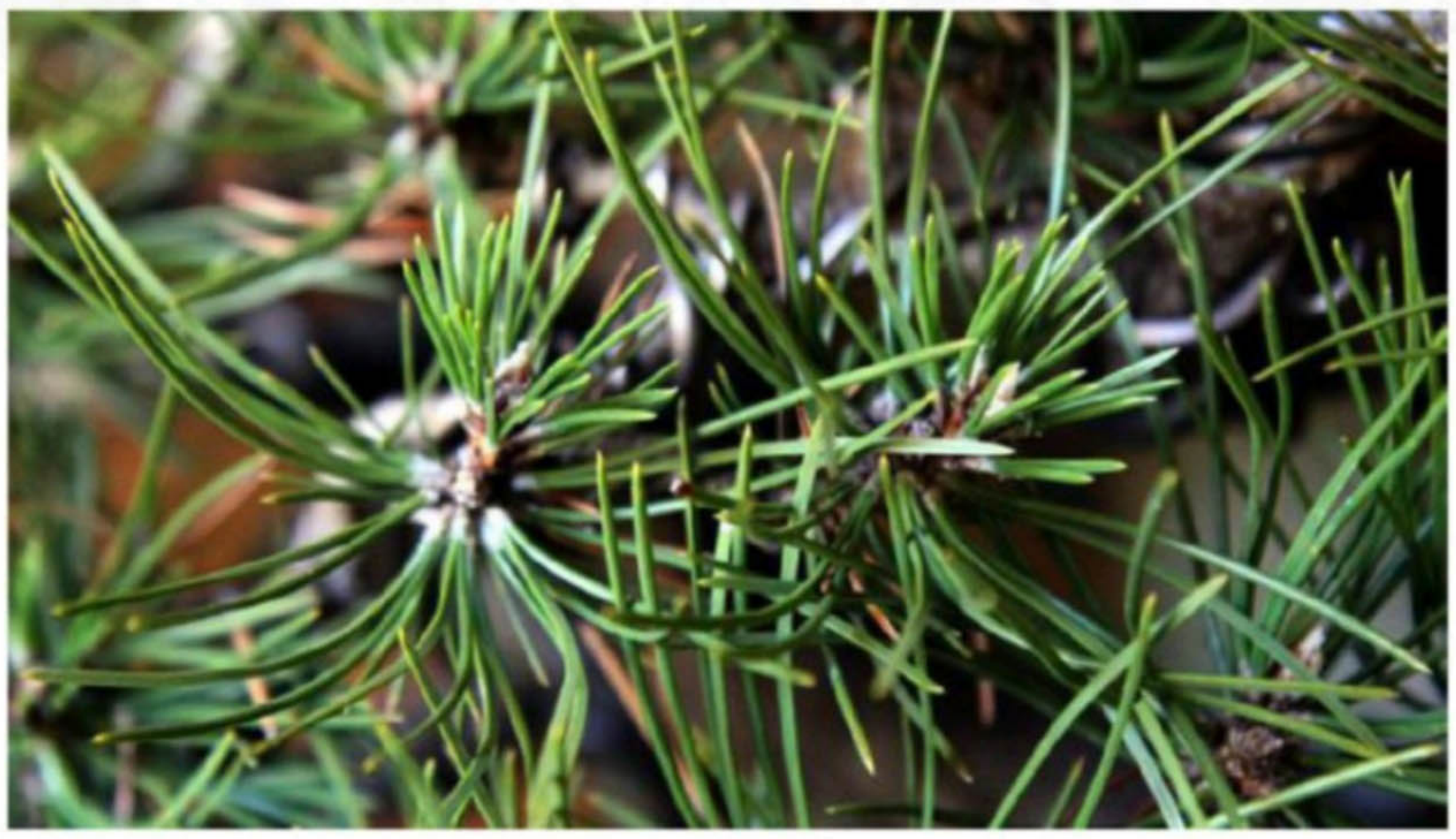


The work of improving its ramification has begun

> ***Our job will be to observe the tree, modestly and humbly***

Improving its ramification

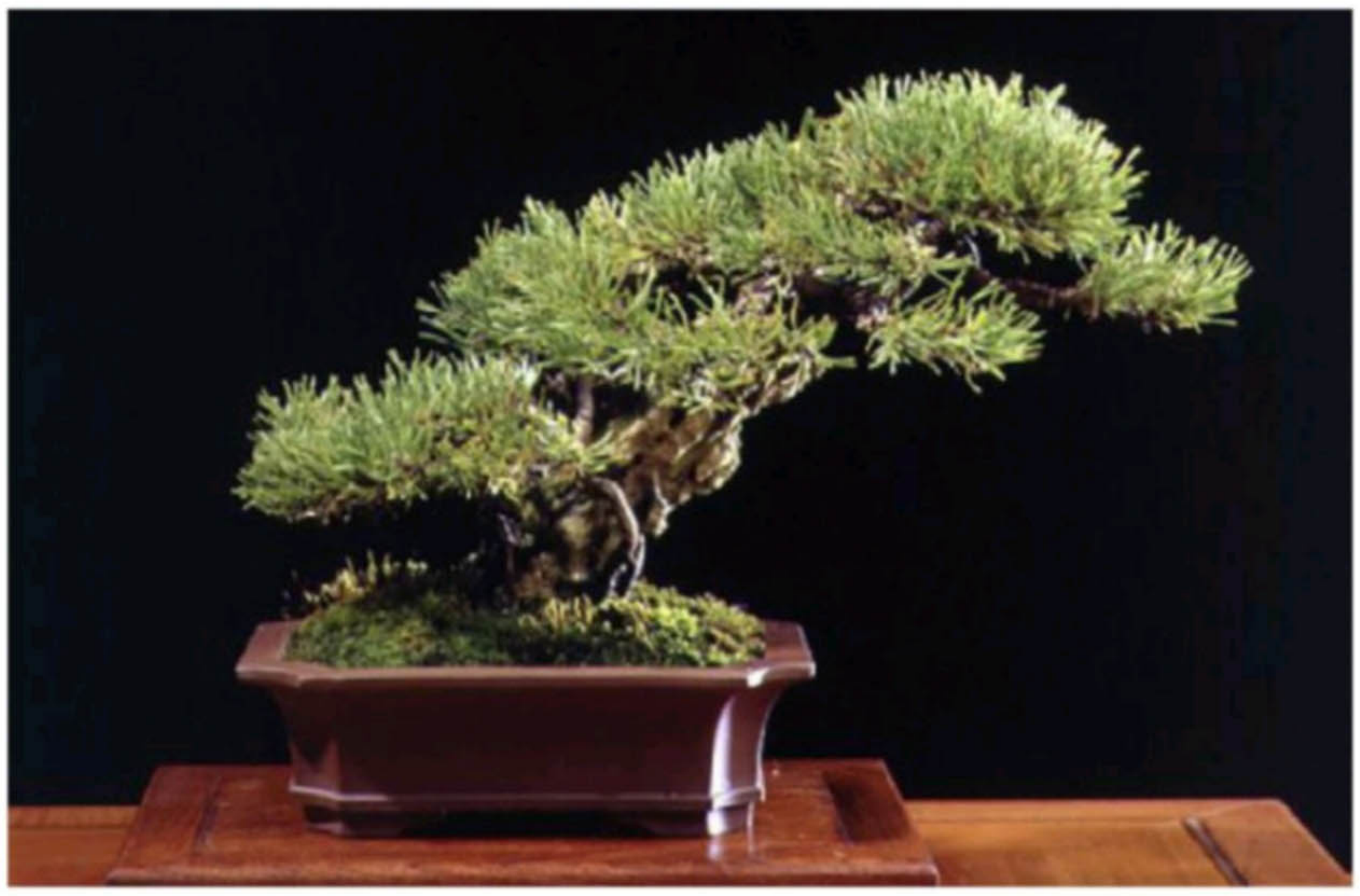
I used the usual technique for mugo: pinch out the candles in the spring one year, and the following year, a so-called mekiri (cut off the entire year's growth) in June. And then repeat this sequence. Mugo is a one-flush pine it's somewhat unpredictable and not very strong: This technique allows good ramification, without stunting growth, and the needles gradually become smaller and smaller.



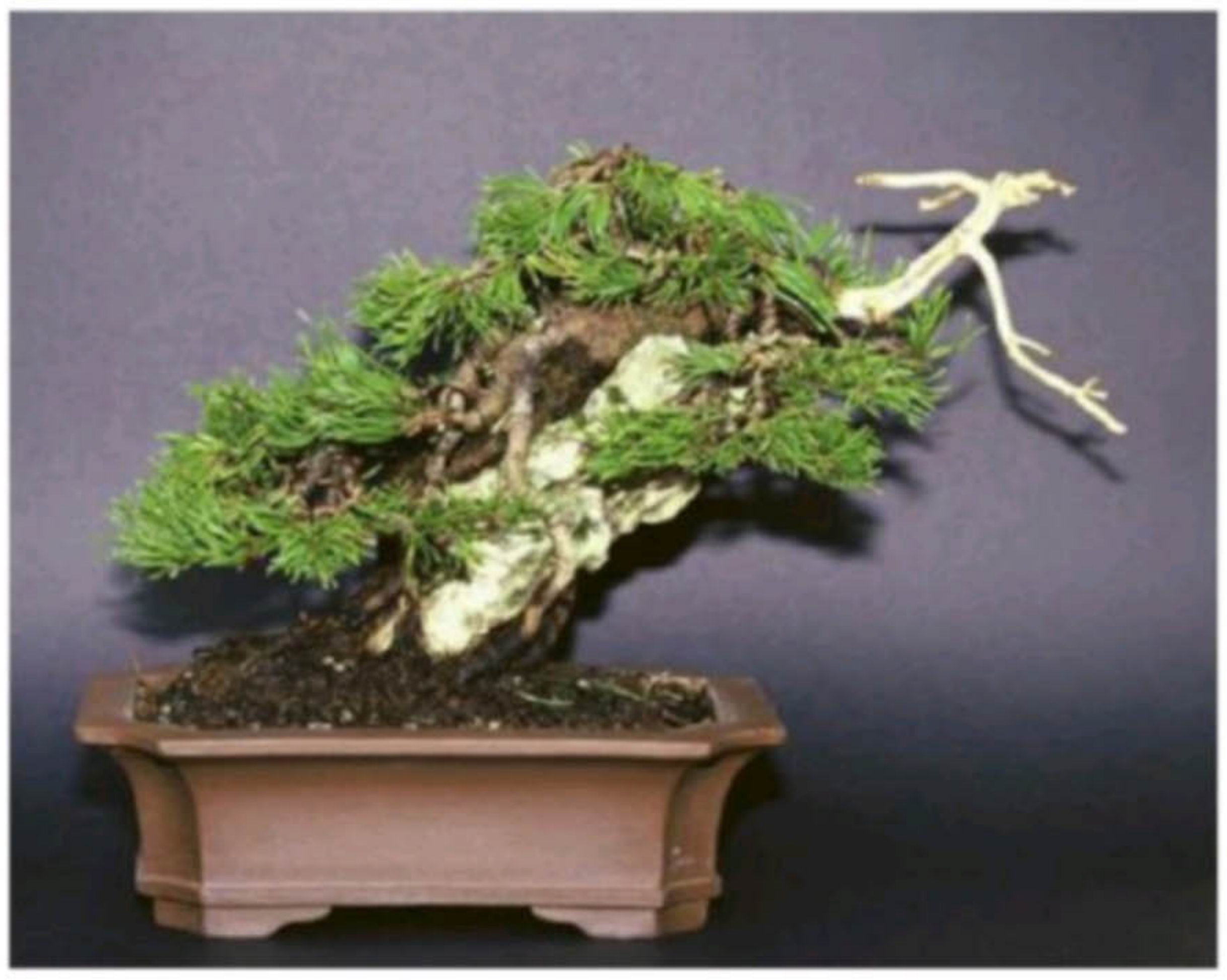
Here you can see the result of the mekiri: the needles on the new shoots are much smaller.

Below: I had planted the mugo in a nice Tokoname pot. The work on ramification bore fruit, but I was not satisfied with the result, the tree seemed unbalanced. A new idea was born: remove the initial crown, transform it into a ten-jin and use the branch just below to create a new crown further to the left

1998



2000



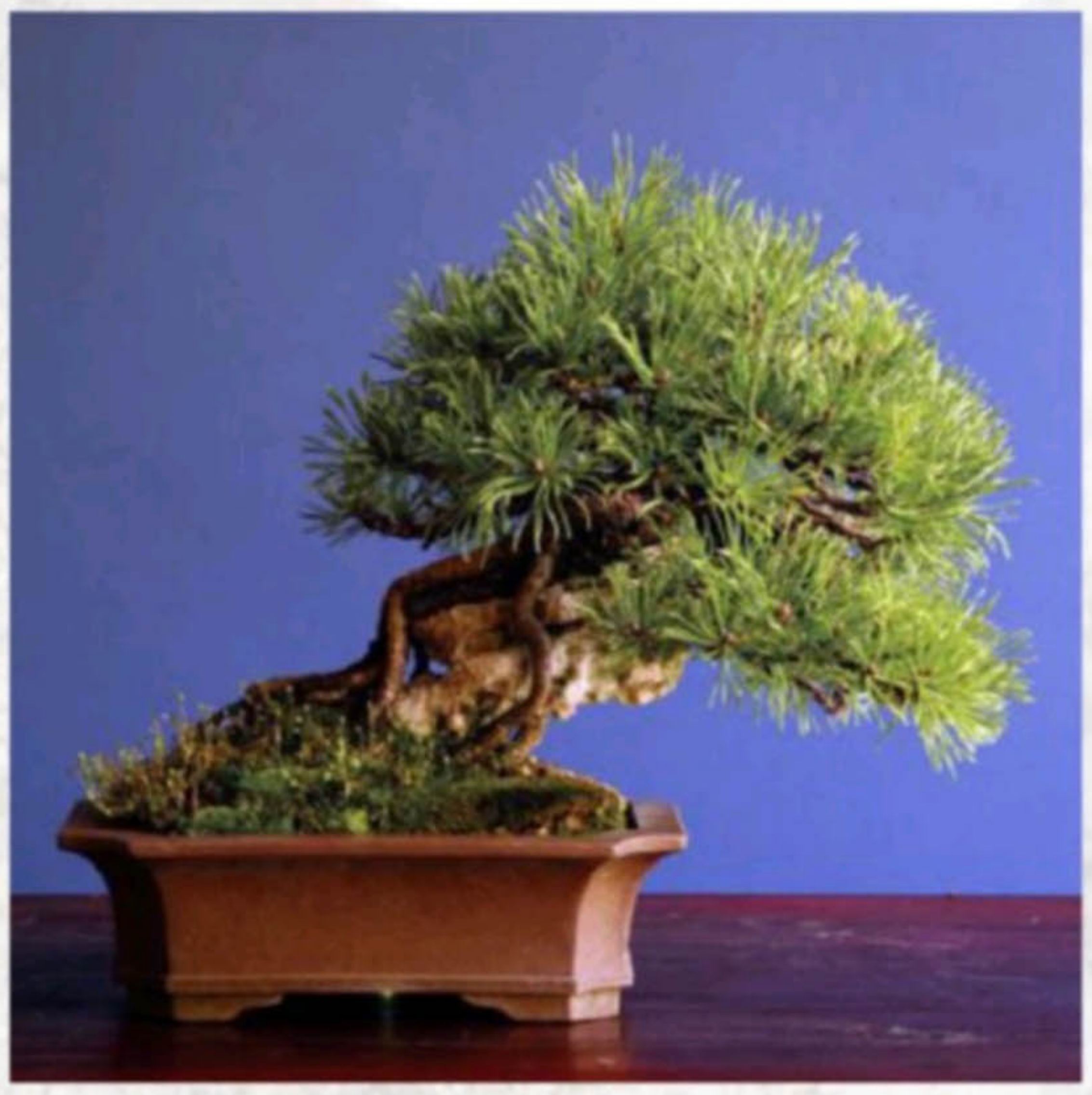
The new strategy. After much hesitation, I implemented this new plan. The result suits me better, the tree has more harmony with a top returning to the left and placed almost above the nebari.

In the 2000s the first branch was on the left, to counterbalance the rightward movement of the composition as a whole. The tree therefore seemed very stable. But as time went on, doubts began to creep in. What if I removed the low branches on the left and chose the first branch on the right?

I got out the scissors in 2009, and here is the result. The tree has become more dynamic because the first branch is an extension of the movement of the stone and trunk to the right. What's more, the stone and roots are far more visible.

On the other hand, with the ramification work, the vegetation forms a compact, heavy mass, with no empty spaces, and the inner structure of the tree is no longer visible.

2009



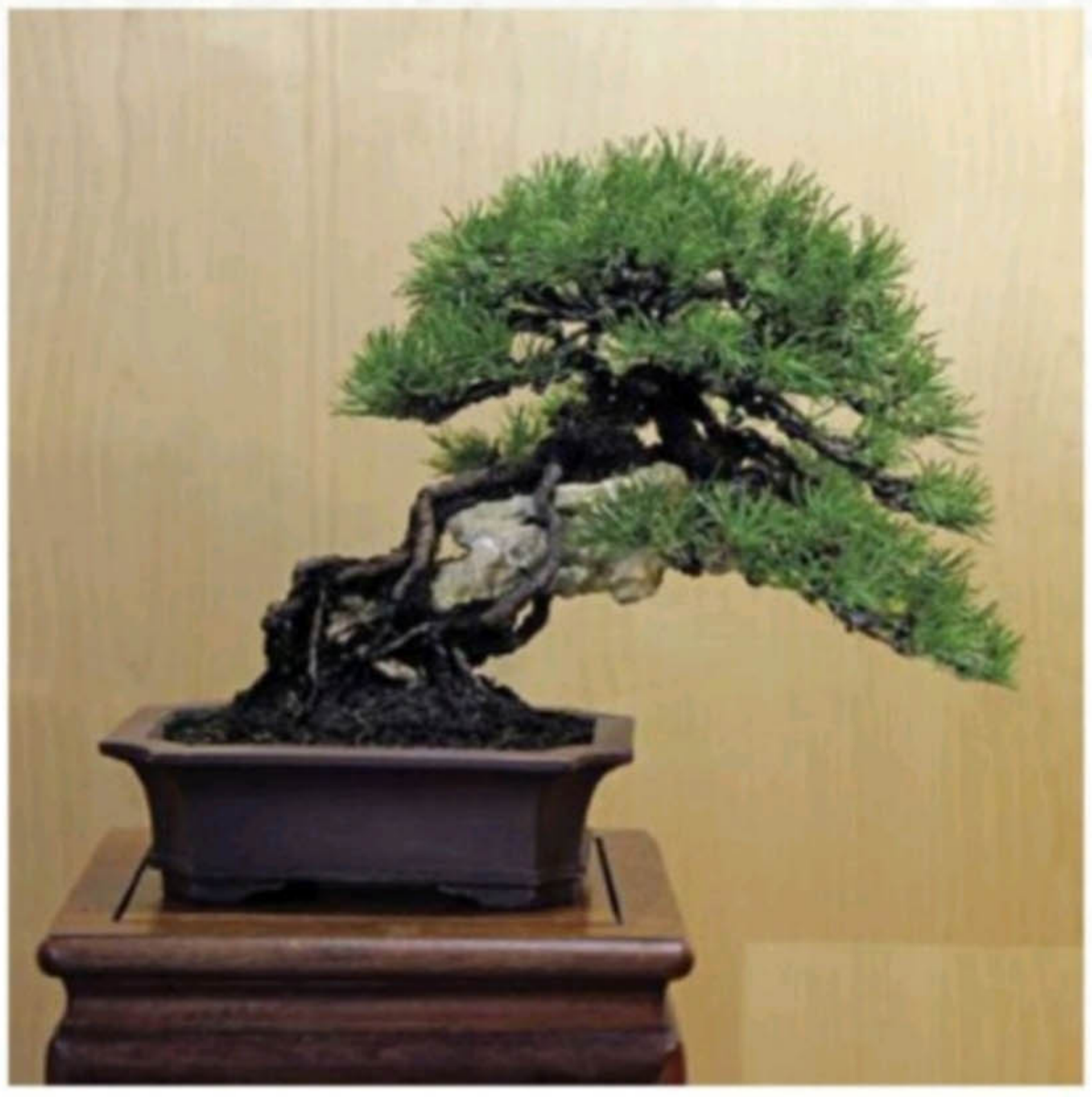
Doubts and yet another idea

Continuing with refining

For 7 years, I continued to improve the ramification of the tree, with a little structural pruning in autumn to improve the taper of the branches. I preserved the two-stem bifurcations and compacted the foliage, balancing the growth by removing the strongest shoots.

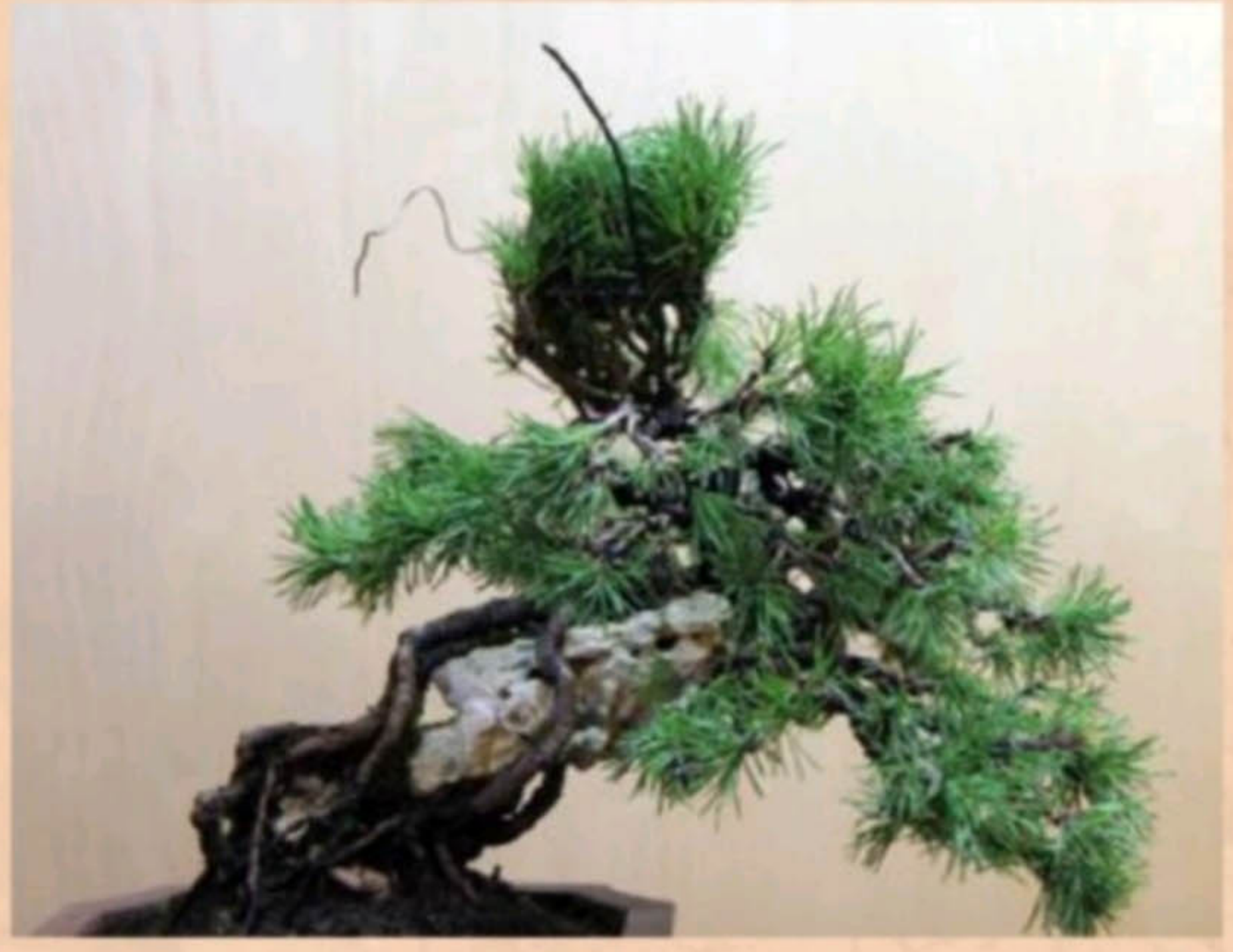
Further wiring has enabled good progress. The tree is now quite transparent, you can see its soul. But it's not yet mature, and the branching still needs to be made denser.

2016



New structure and size after wiring

2016



Using the so-called 'hairdressing' technique when wiring

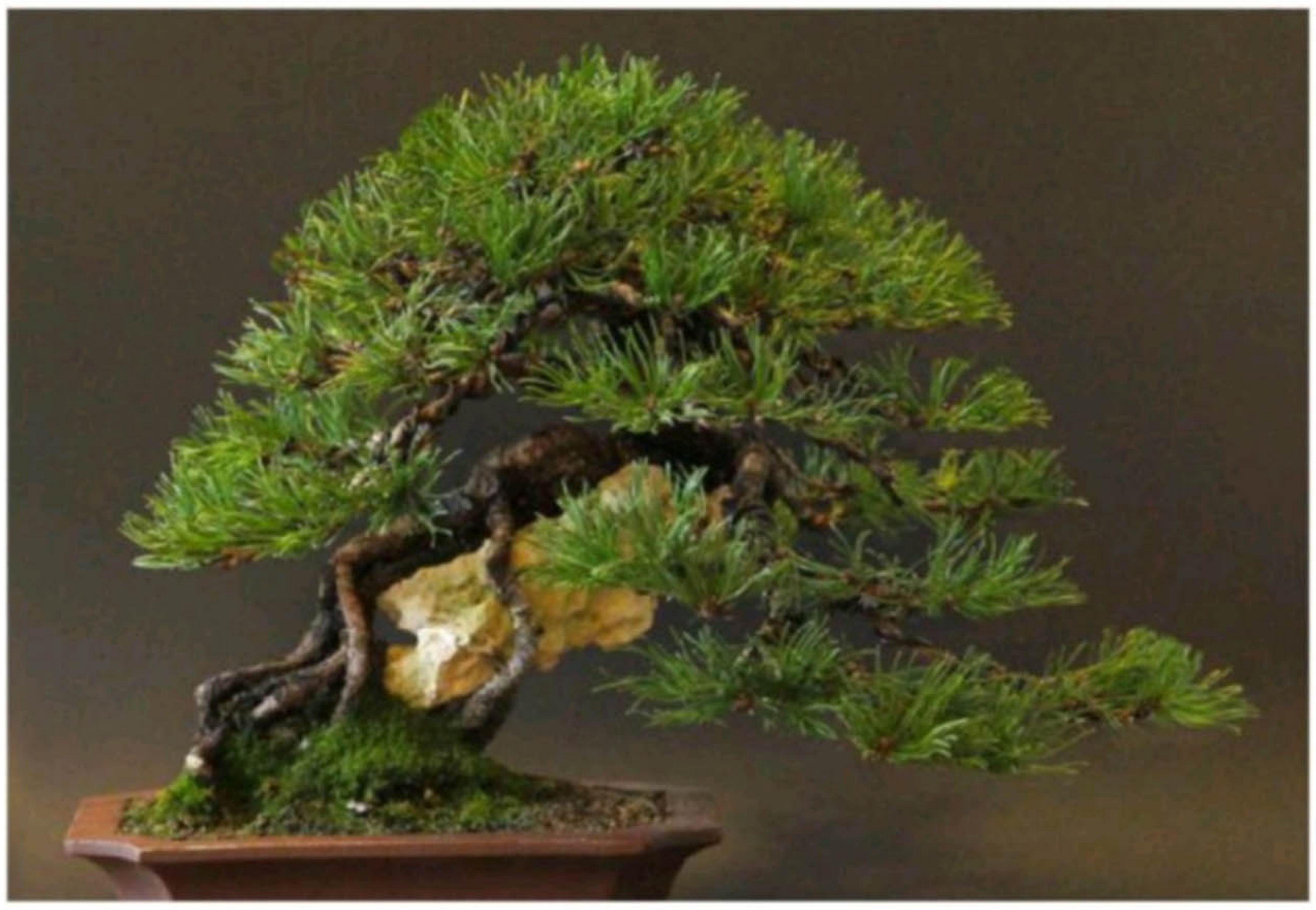
The 'hairdressing' technique

It's difficult to wire a tree with lots of small branches close together. Here's a little trick to make wiring easier. Use a piece of wire to make a bundle of the top branches to clear the way for the lower branches. Start with the lower branches and work your way up.

The ladies' hairdresser uses the same technique, but with clips instead of wire.

5 years later, the long work which started in 1988, is bearing fruit. The tree is now very mature and looks like a classic Japanese tree. It is asymmetrical: from the top; lefthand vegetation represents one third, on the right, two thirds. There is a big difference in level between the first branch on the right and the balance branch on the left. The dense vegetation on the left forms an almost continuous line while the other side is jagged, with large empty spaces.

2021

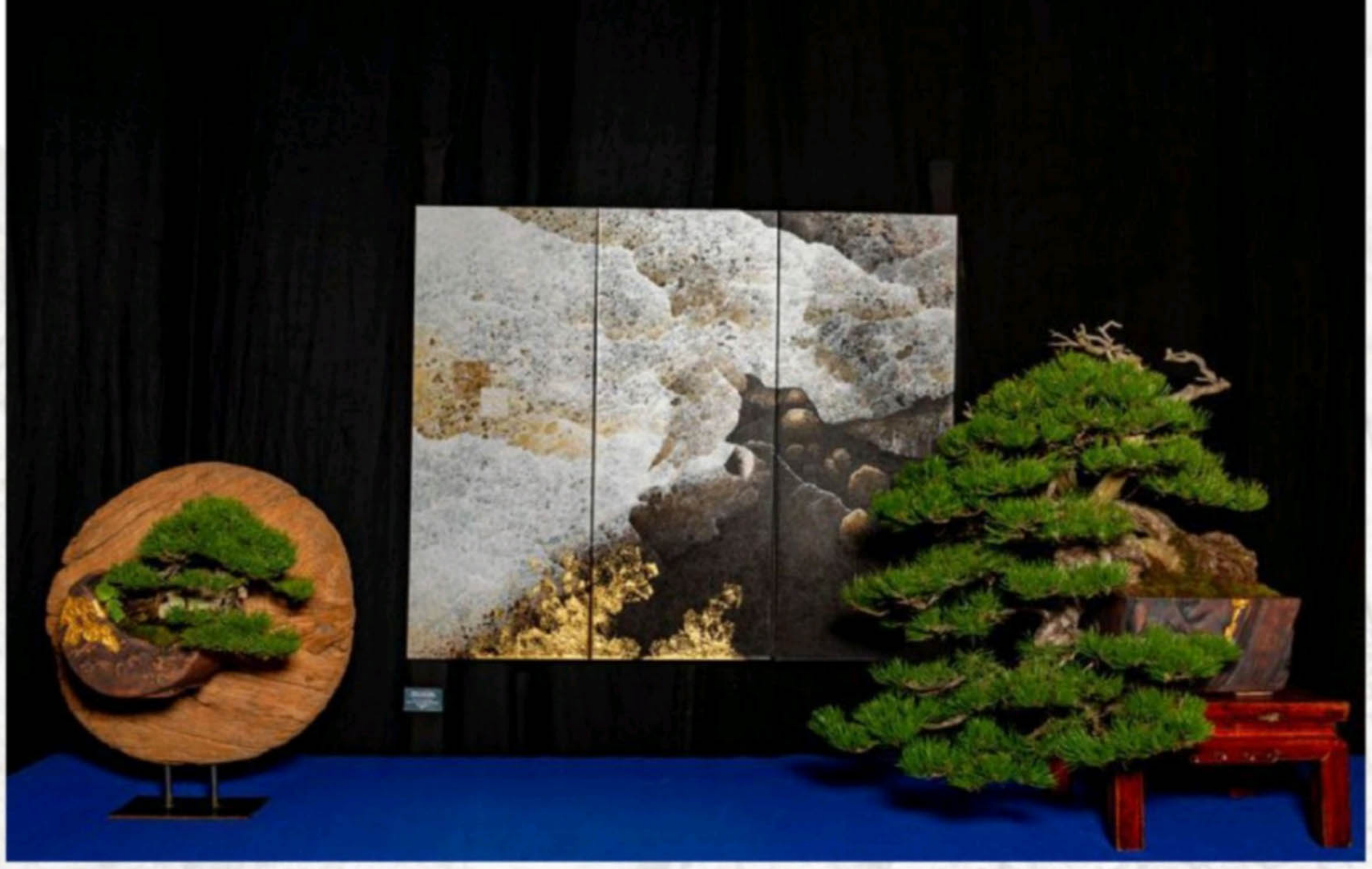


It's almost there

2023

Too classic

In the end, I found the tree too classic. I decided to make a unique pot myself to increase the personality of this mugo. At the 2023 Trophy, I presented it in its new version, hanging on an old Chinese rice mill, next to one of my paintings that I had exhibited at the 20th anniversary of Kunio Kobayashi's Shunka-En in 2022.



A new life begins. The display with the small pine on the left at the Trophy 2023

> *An error of two millimetres will jump out at you*

Final conclusion

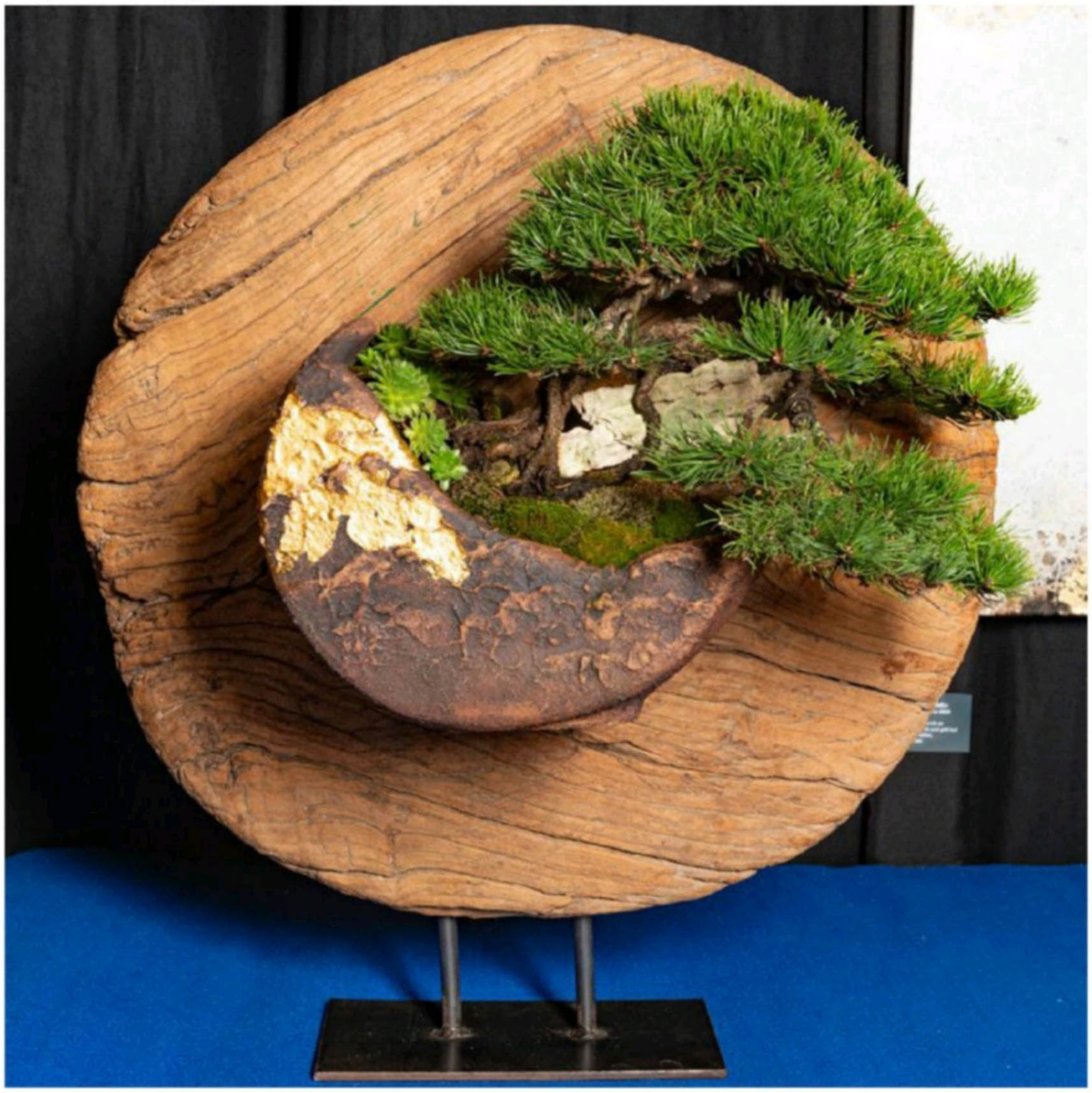
We can draw two conclusions from the example of a small mugo pine measuring only 22 cm.

First, that you should not get stuck on a project. It can evolve according to the growth of the tree and, of course, our skills and an awareness of what a real bonsai is, over the years.

There are many examples in Japan where renowned Masters take back in hand an old bonsai that has lost its initial design. They may remove branches, create a shari, modify the planting angle, or even completely change the front.

The second conclusion is that we should have more courage to work on small trees. Working on a 100 cm high yamadori is far easier, both in terms of cultivation and shaping: a branch misplaced by two centimetres will not be seen. On a mame or shohin, certainly less spectacular, an error of a mere two millimetres will jump out at you.

The pine showing off its new design



NO DISTRACTIONS

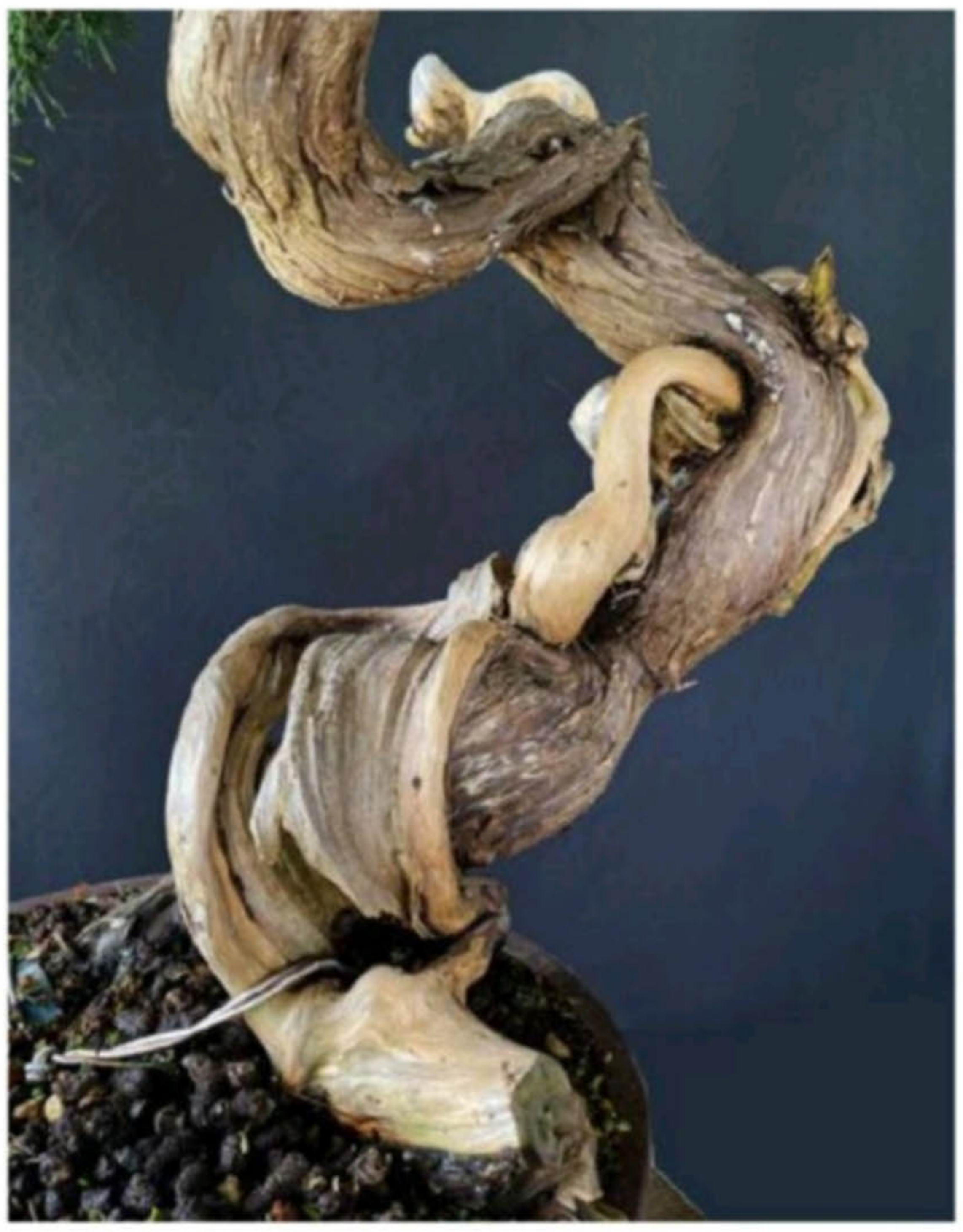
Work on a Sabina juniper with a view of the famous Lake Maggiore

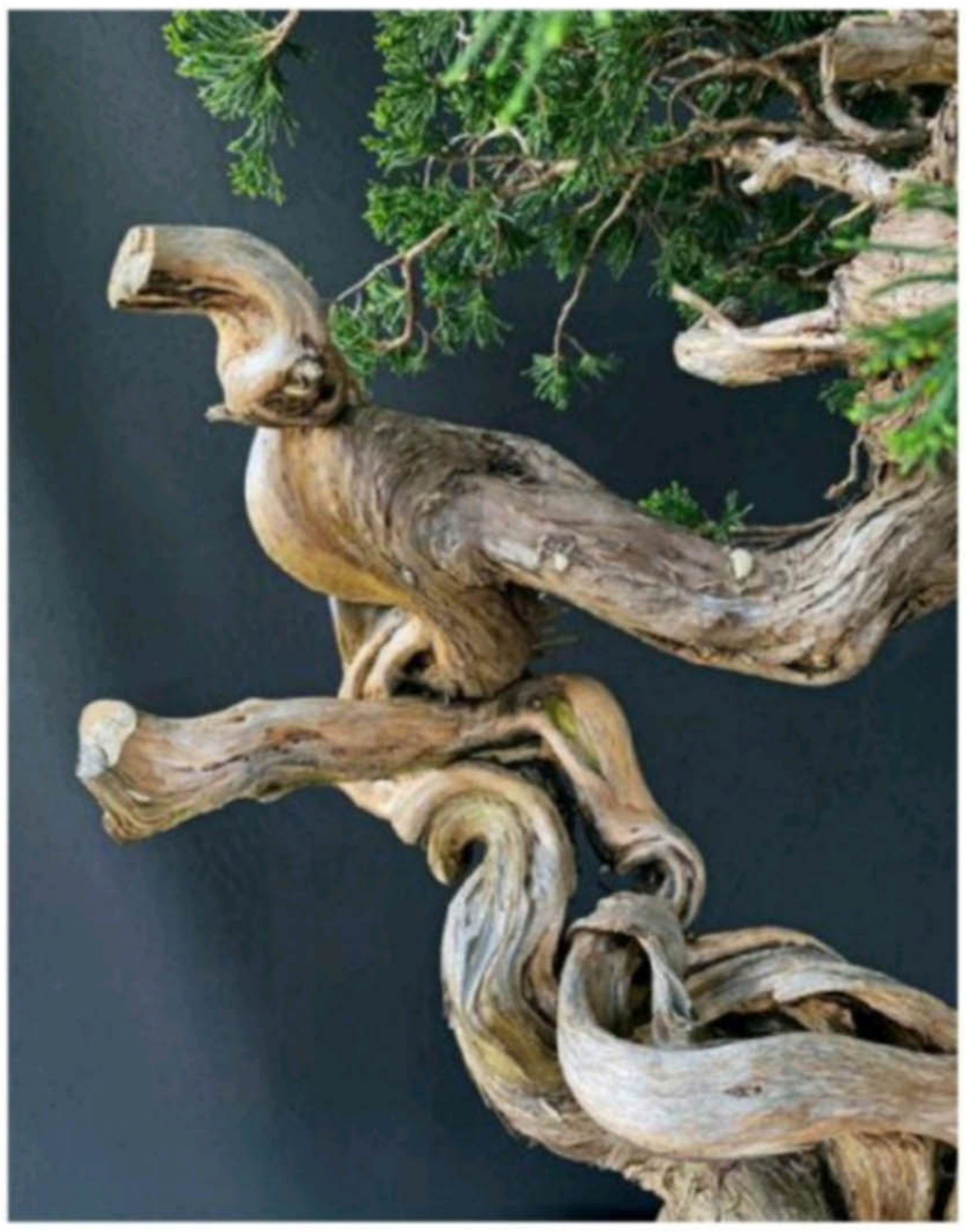
Text: Patrick Hêche Photography: Patrick Hêche and Luca Tamburello

When arriving at the studio of Luca Tamburello, the magnificent view of the famous Lake Maggiore in Switzerland, would be a big distraction for most of us. Not for Patrick Hêche, though. He was fully concentrating on his Sabina juniper — a difficult puzzle that had to be solved

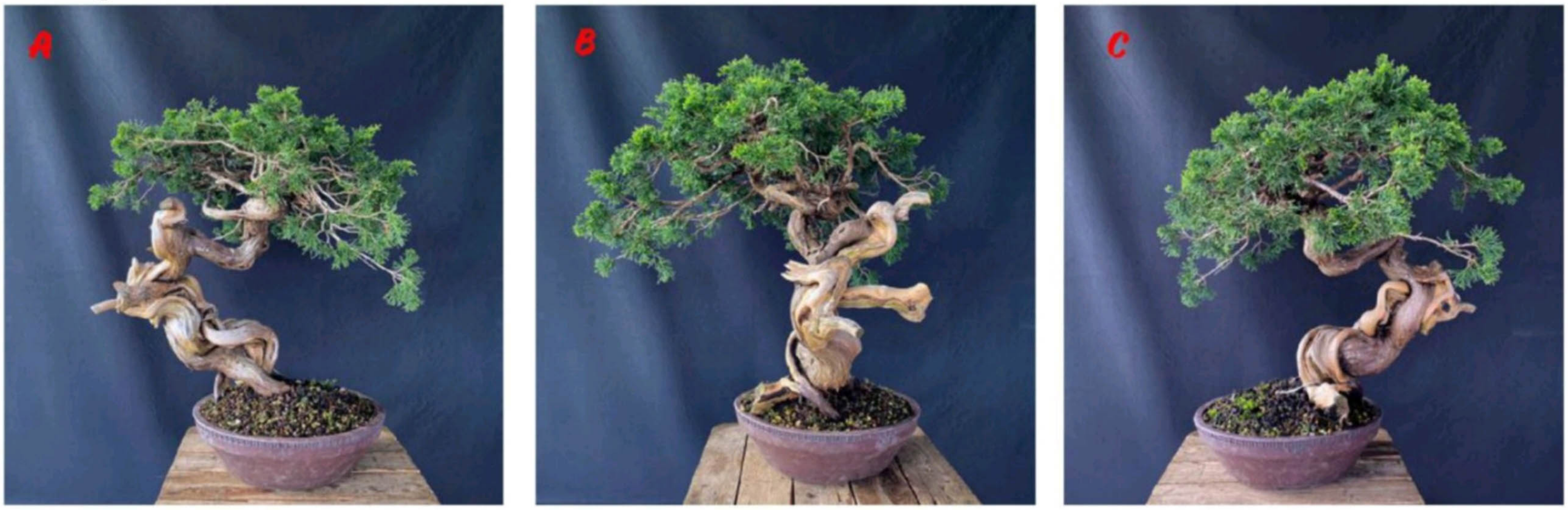
I was thinking of grafting it

For Pentecost weekend, I went to Ticino, Switzerland, to Luca Tamburello's studio to work on this Sabina that I had bought at the Trophy in 2023. From the very first glance, the deadwood had captivated my attention. The living vein wraps around it beautifully, giving the tree a dramatic appearance. The foliage is splendid, but I was still considering grafting *itoigawa* on it as an experiment. After weighing the pros and cons for a year, I finally decided to keep the original foliage. Indeed, it is not only very beautiful, but also very dense, almost reminiscent of a *Chinensis* juniper





Finding the front



The various options to choose from

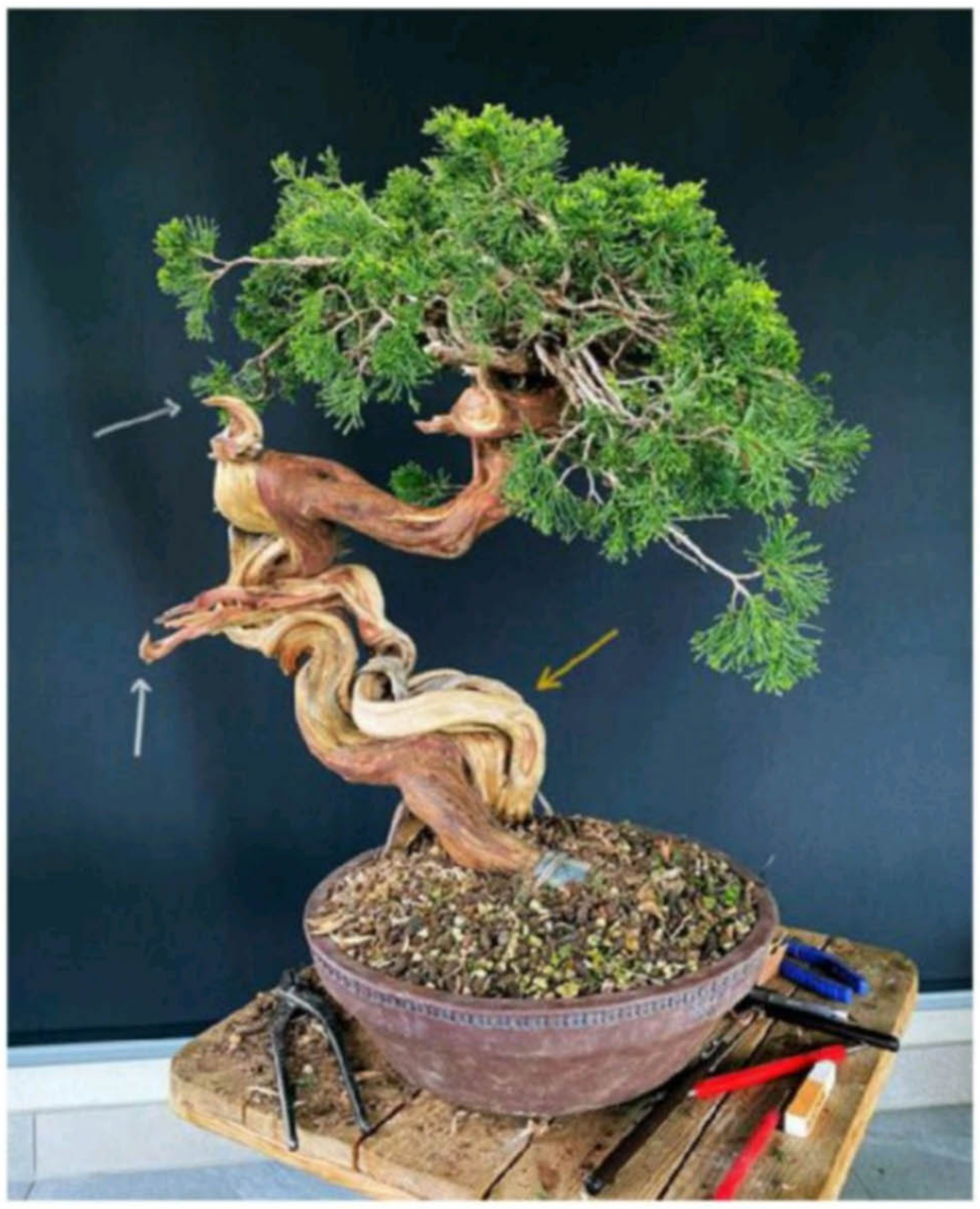
My choice naturally fell on position A, which I turned slightly to the left. Position B was also possible, but the relationship between the living grain and the deadwood looks more attractive and balanced in position A.

Now that the front has been decided, I can begin cleaning up the live vein and deadwood. There are three large cuts to correct (see arrows) : two on the front and one on the back at the base of the trunk.

On the front, there's an area of deadwood (see photos on previous page) that was too smooth compared to the rest. Under Luca's expert guidance, I added some grain to this overly smooth section. Once the work was completed, and Luca had made the final touches, I applied jin liquid to all the deadwood.

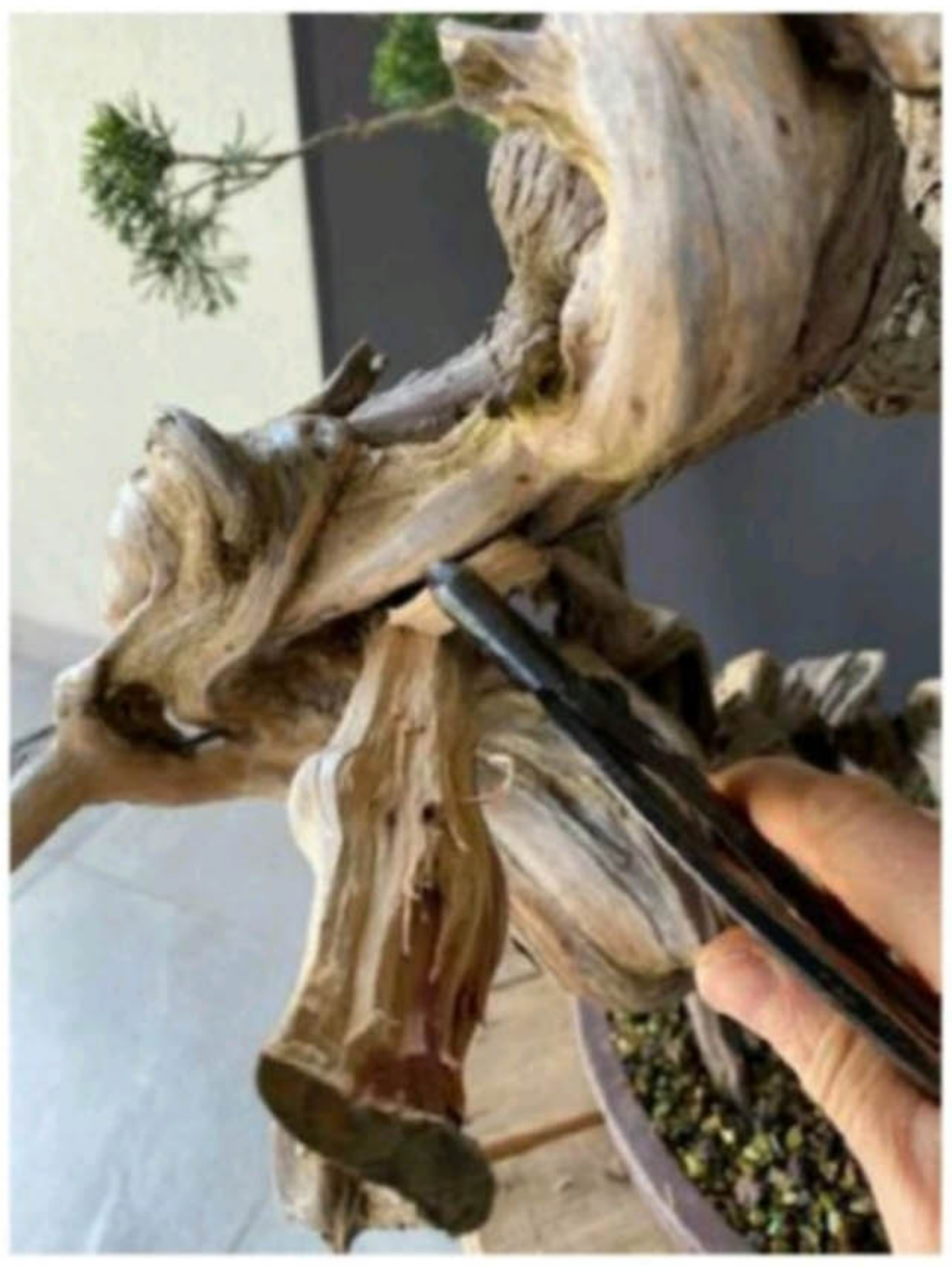
Luca Tamburello applying some corrections to my tree

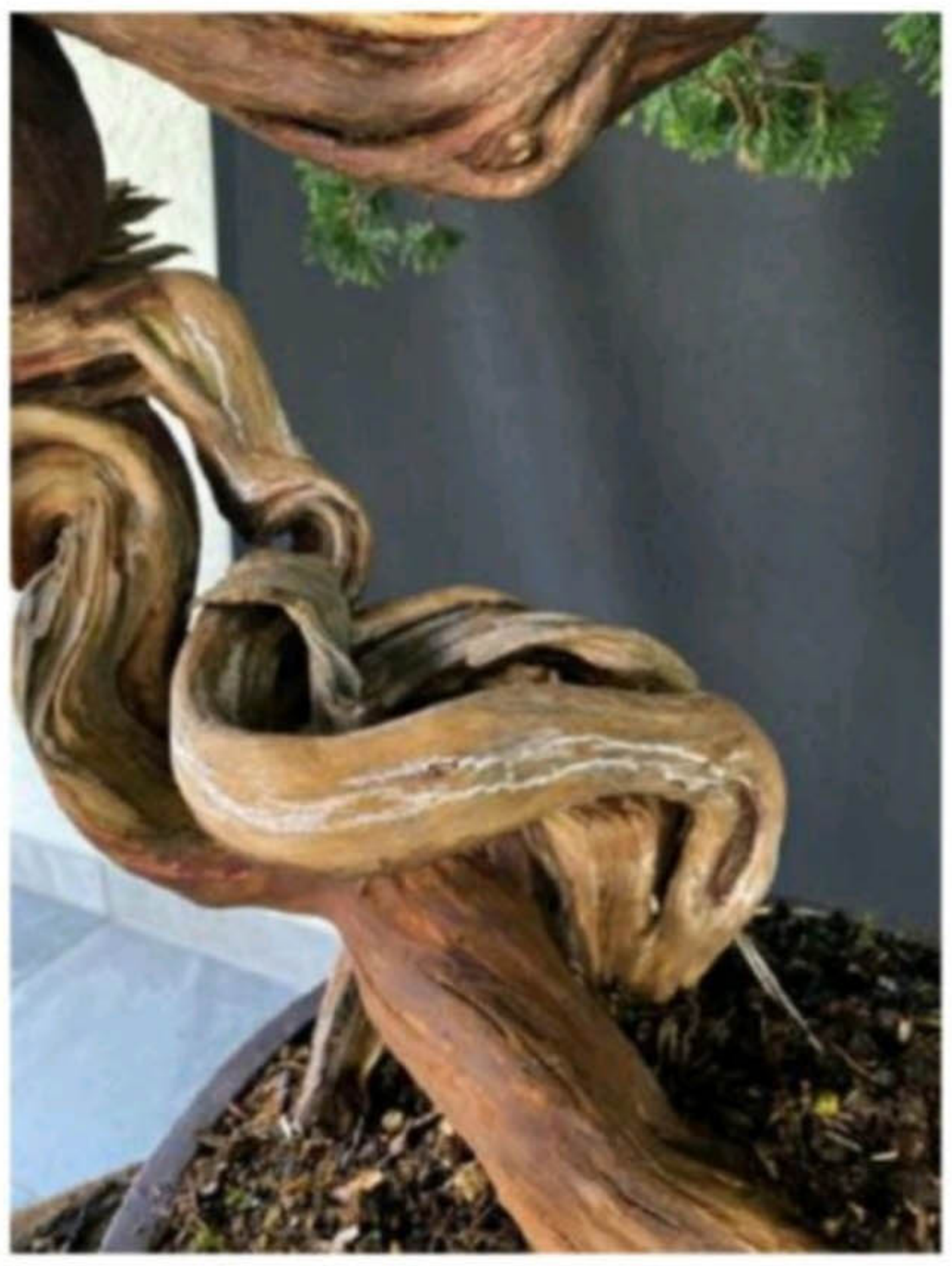
Side A: The front. Arrows point out the work done on jin and deadwood

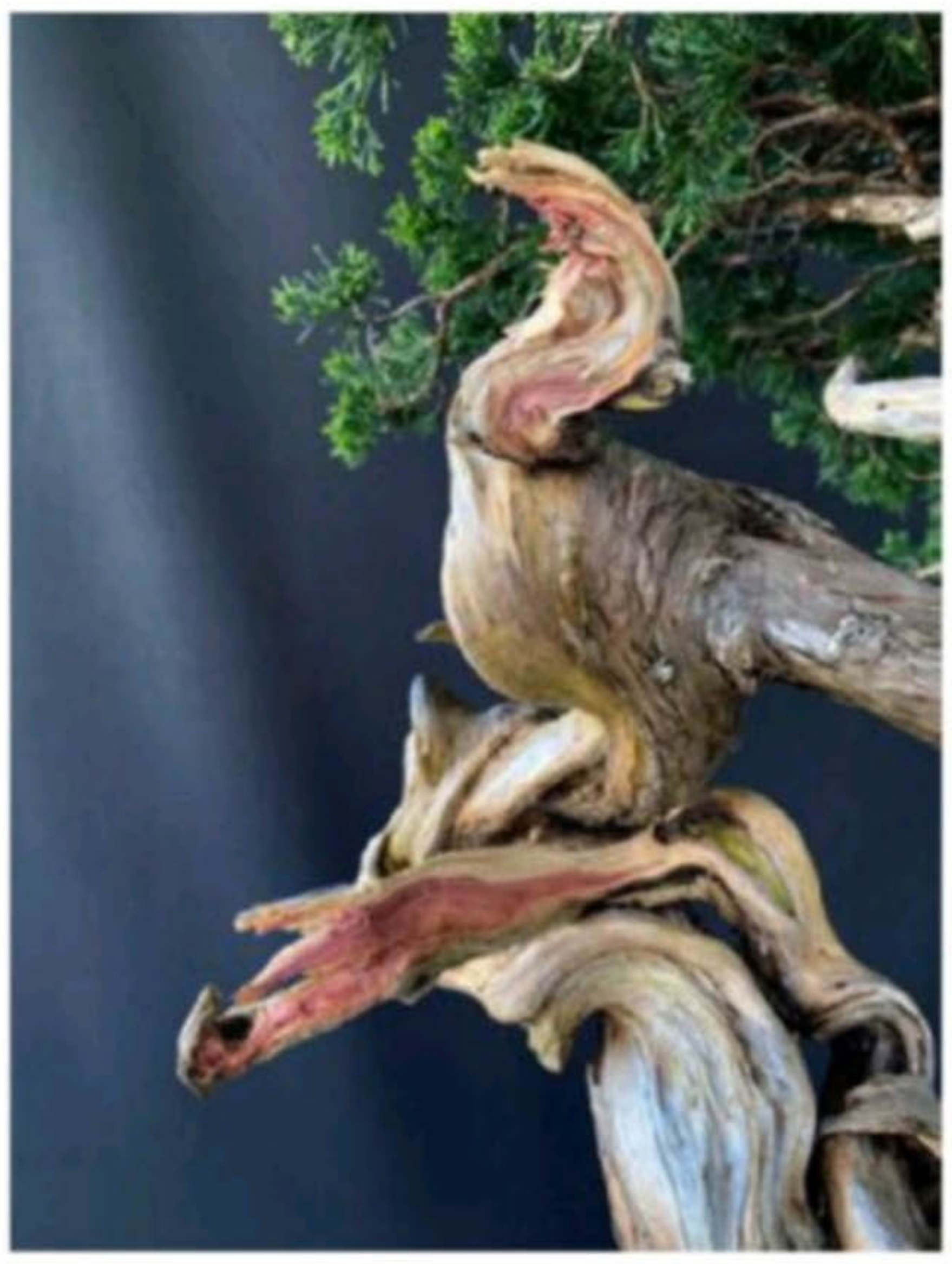


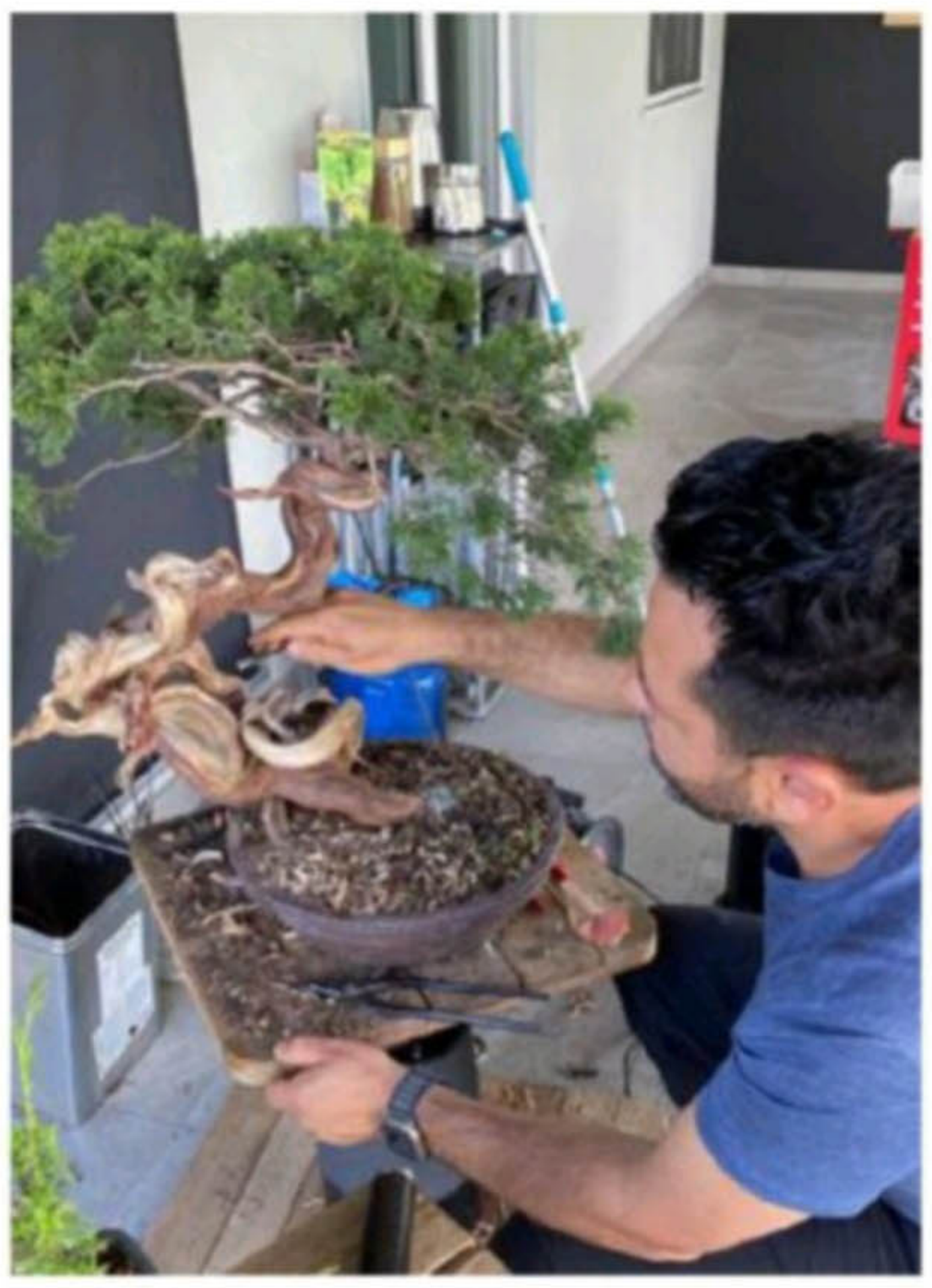
My Master

Luca Tamburello, born in Verbania, Italy, discovered the world of bonsai in 1993 and became very passionate about it. Since 1999, he has travelled annually to the Shunsho-en nursery in Takamatsu, Japan, run by Koji Hiramatsu, to perfect his techniques and deepen his skills. The knowledge he has acquired over the years is then passed on to his students.
At the Tamburello Bonsai Studio, Luca offers a variety of classes suitable for both beginners and advanced, workshops for bonsai clubs and he offers complete bonsai restyling services. See more on: www.tambubonsai.ch.


Using jin pliers to adjust an ugly stump


Chalk marks where we will add more character


The result after adjusting the ugly stump


Luca carries out the final touches

We need a back branch

The foliage is dense, with many small twigs and a few larger branches that all lead upwards. Therefore, there is no lower branch at the rear.

Moving up from the base of the trunk, we come to the first two branches. One of them will serve as the rear branch. I remove the lower branch (red arrow) for two reasons: first is that it doesn't have much foliage, but more importantly, when removed it allows the thicker branch to be lowered to create this much-needed rear branch.

To lower it and make it more flexible, it must be hollowed out by about ten centimetres, then a thick aluminium wire placed inside. Before attaching the raffia, I fill the groove with putty to prevent the branch from drying out. I install a double copper wire and a guy rope to keep the branch in place after bending.

Steps to adjusting the branch

1. Hollow out the branch: Using a suitable tool, like a Dremel, carve a small groove about ten centimetres long. This helps make the branch more flexible for bending.

2. Insert a wire: Use aluminium wire that is thick enough to fit into the groove and support the branch during shaping.

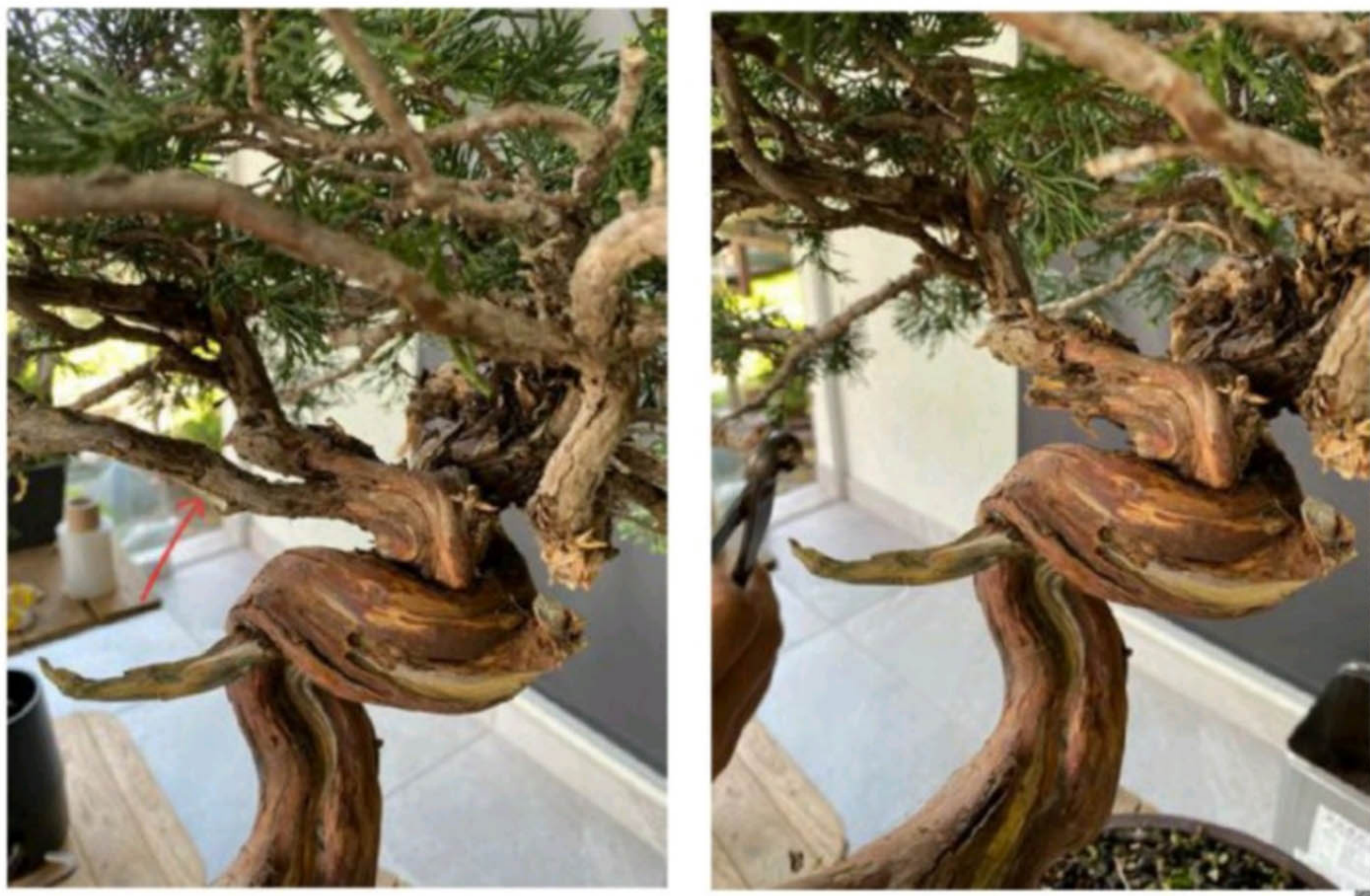
3. Apply the sealant: Fill the cut with healing sealant to prevent the branch from drying out and promote healing.

4. Secure the raffia: Wrap wet raffia around the branch. The raffia retains moisture and protects the bark during bending.

5. Apply copper wire: Wrap copper wires around the branch to strengthen the support and allow for precise shaping.

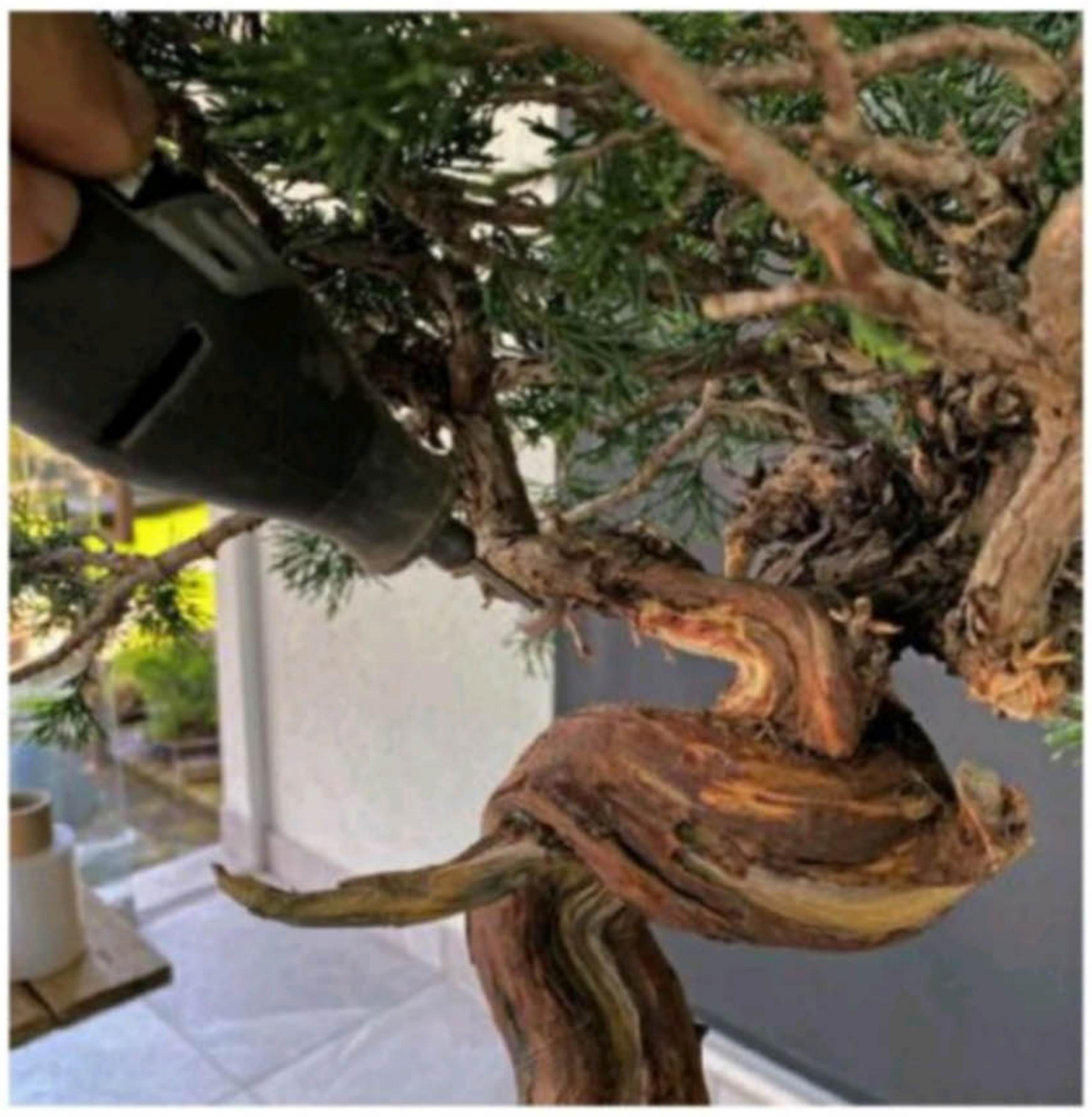
6. Use a guy wire: Attach a guy wire to keep the branch in position.

Before and after removing the lower branch

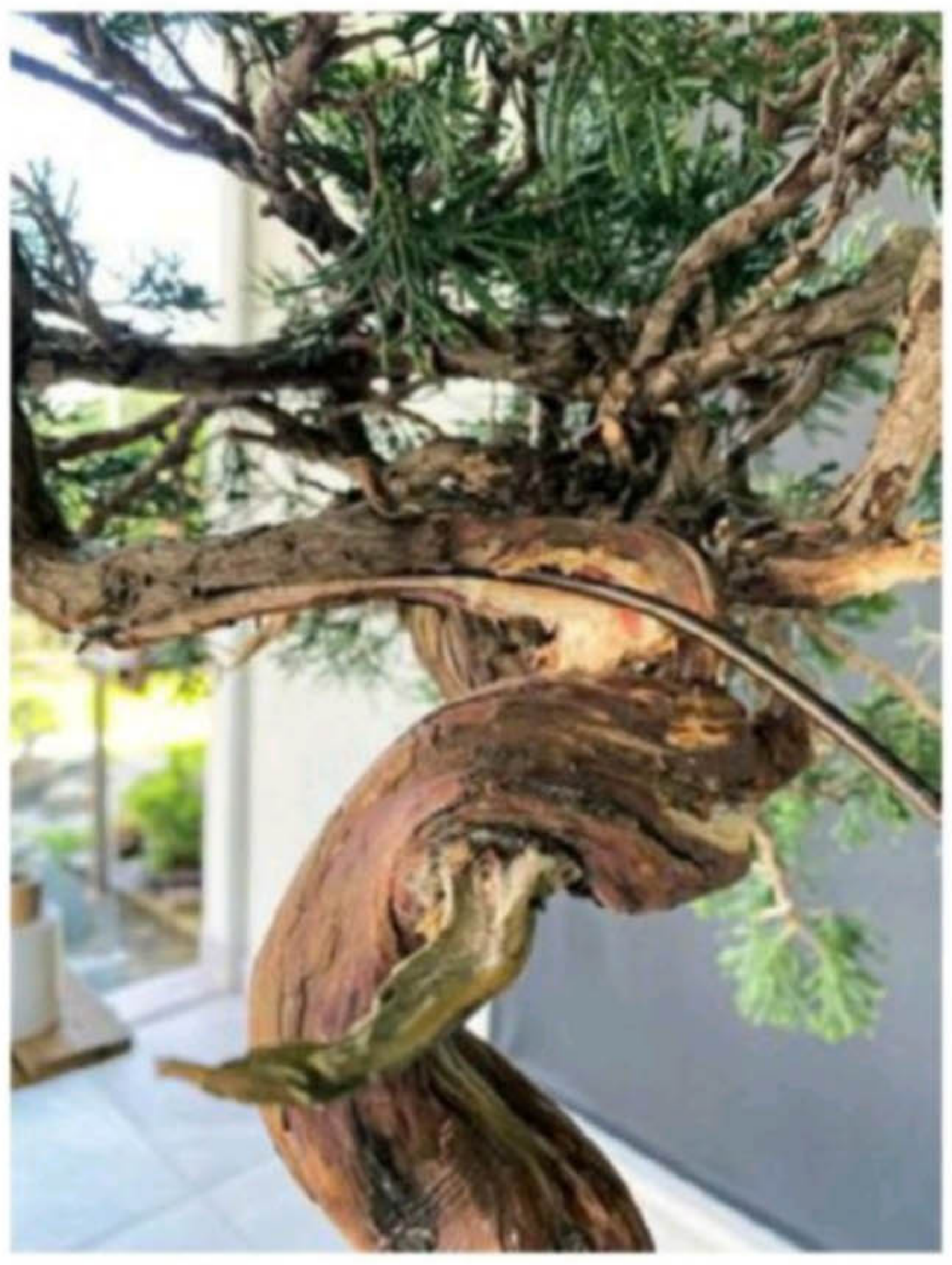


Carving the branch

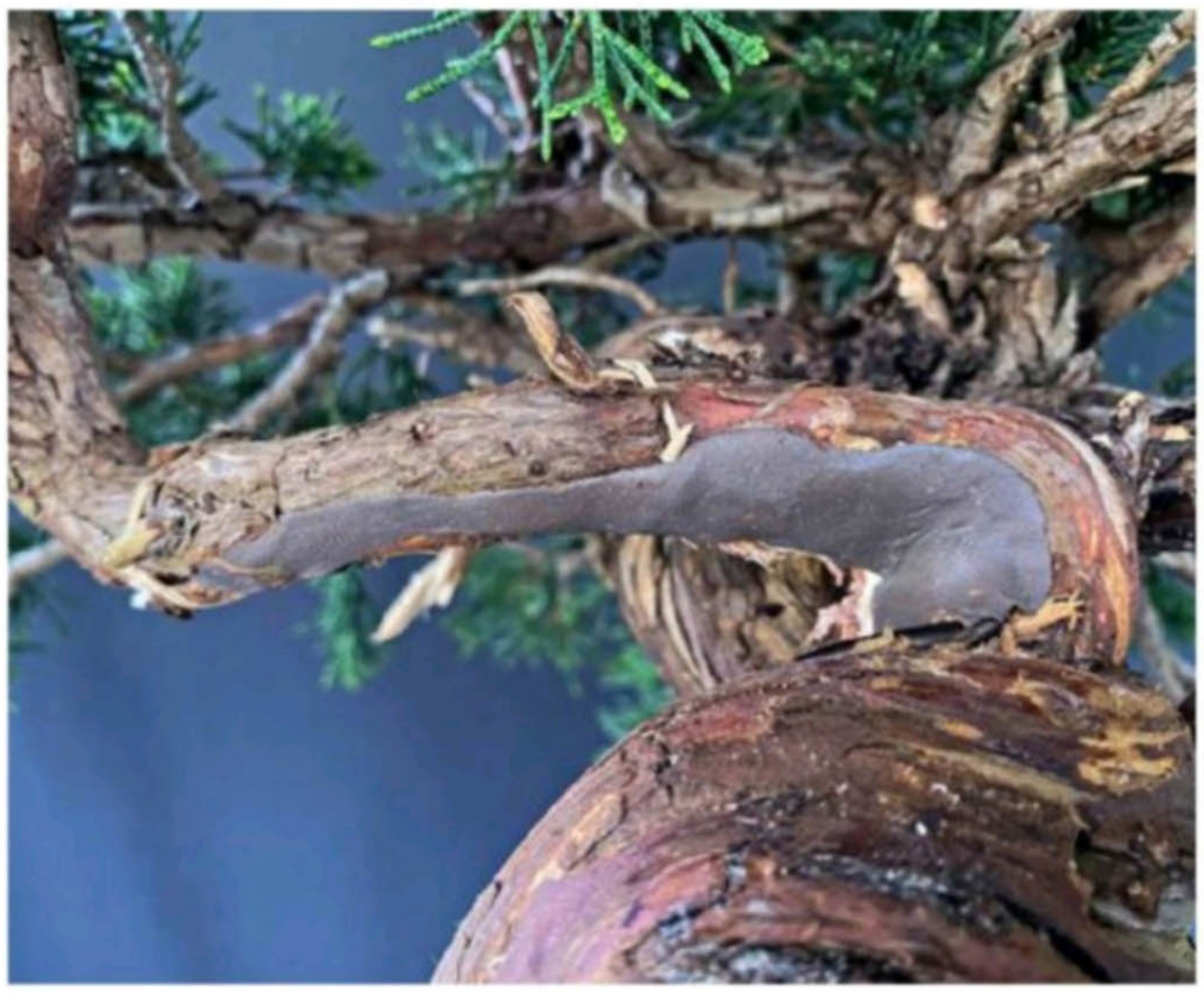
Carve with a Dremel



Insert an aluminium wire



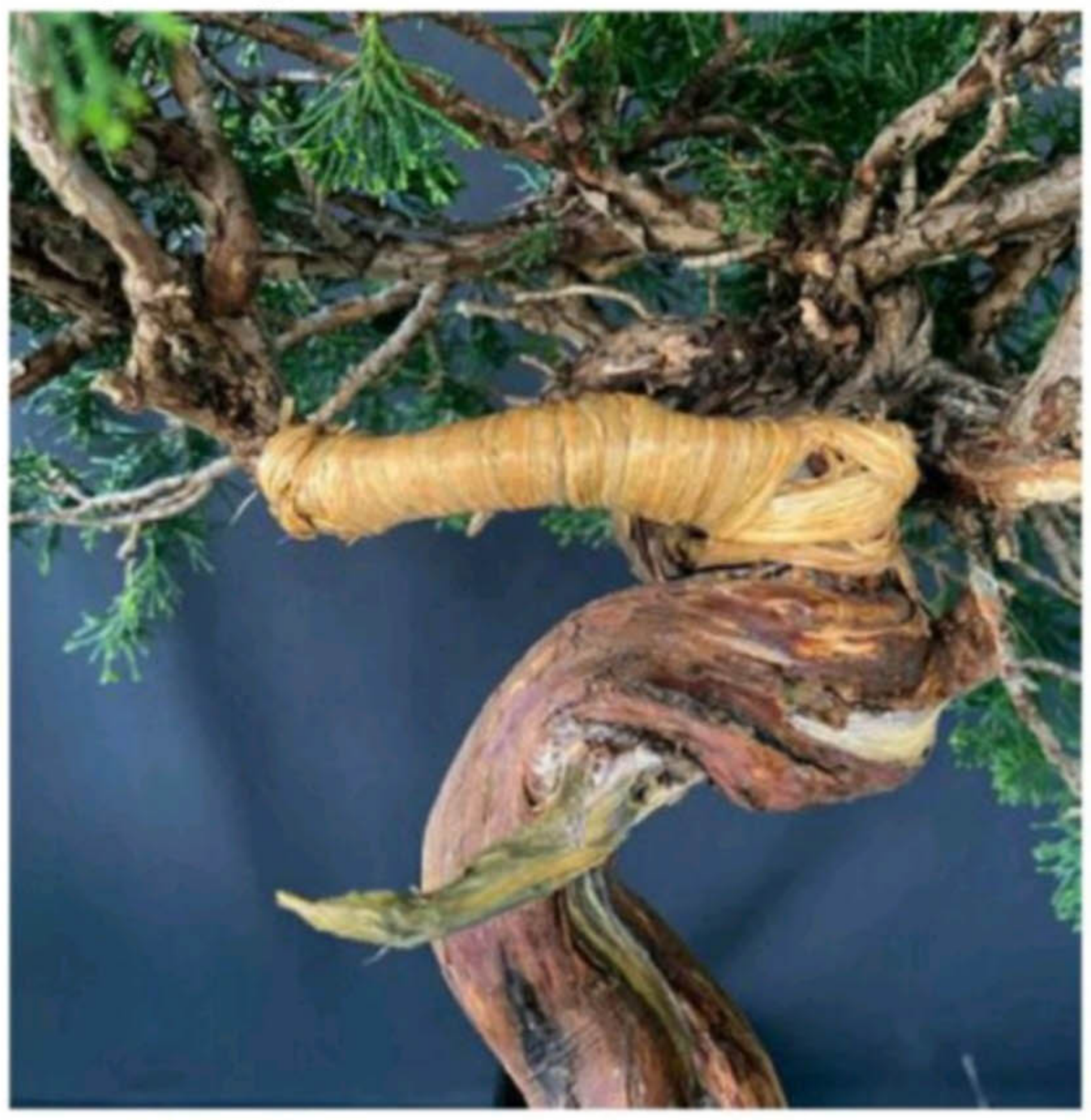
Fill the cut with healing sealant



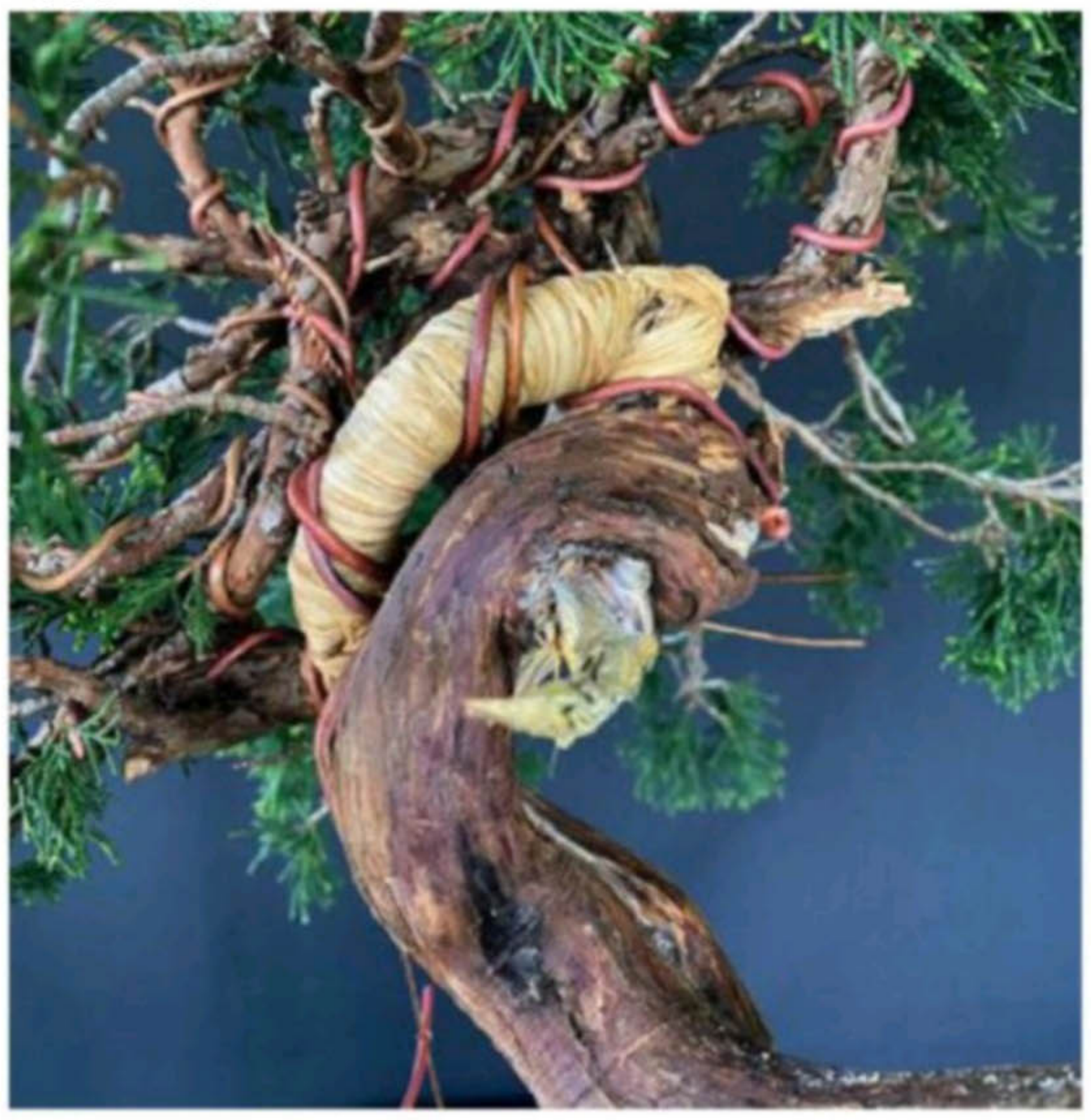
After lowering the branch as far as it will go, I can now begin laying the wire around the entire tree and start shaping it. We place the branches one by one, starting at the bottom and working our way up to the top. The tree is slowly taking shape and it begins to reveal its final shape.

I watch Luca's work very carefully and bombard him with questions, which he always answers in great detail. When he corrects my mistakes, I pay very close attention and take notes. Sometimes it's a lot of information to take in at once. Once the styling is done, we make further small adjustments, checking that each branch is optimally placed to promote its future development.

Wrap wet raffia around the branch.



Apply copper wire



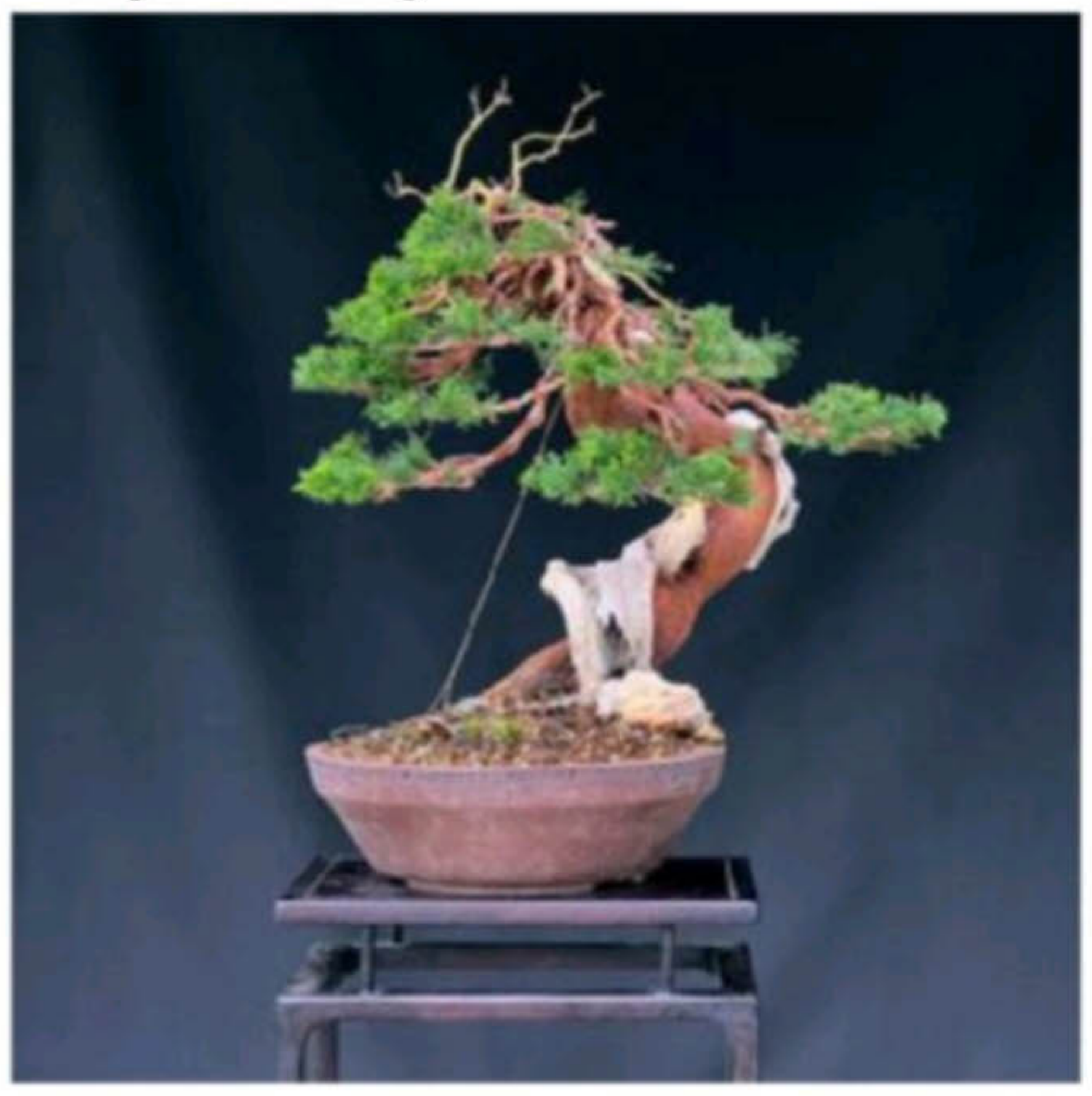
Applying wire

The rear branch is clearly visible

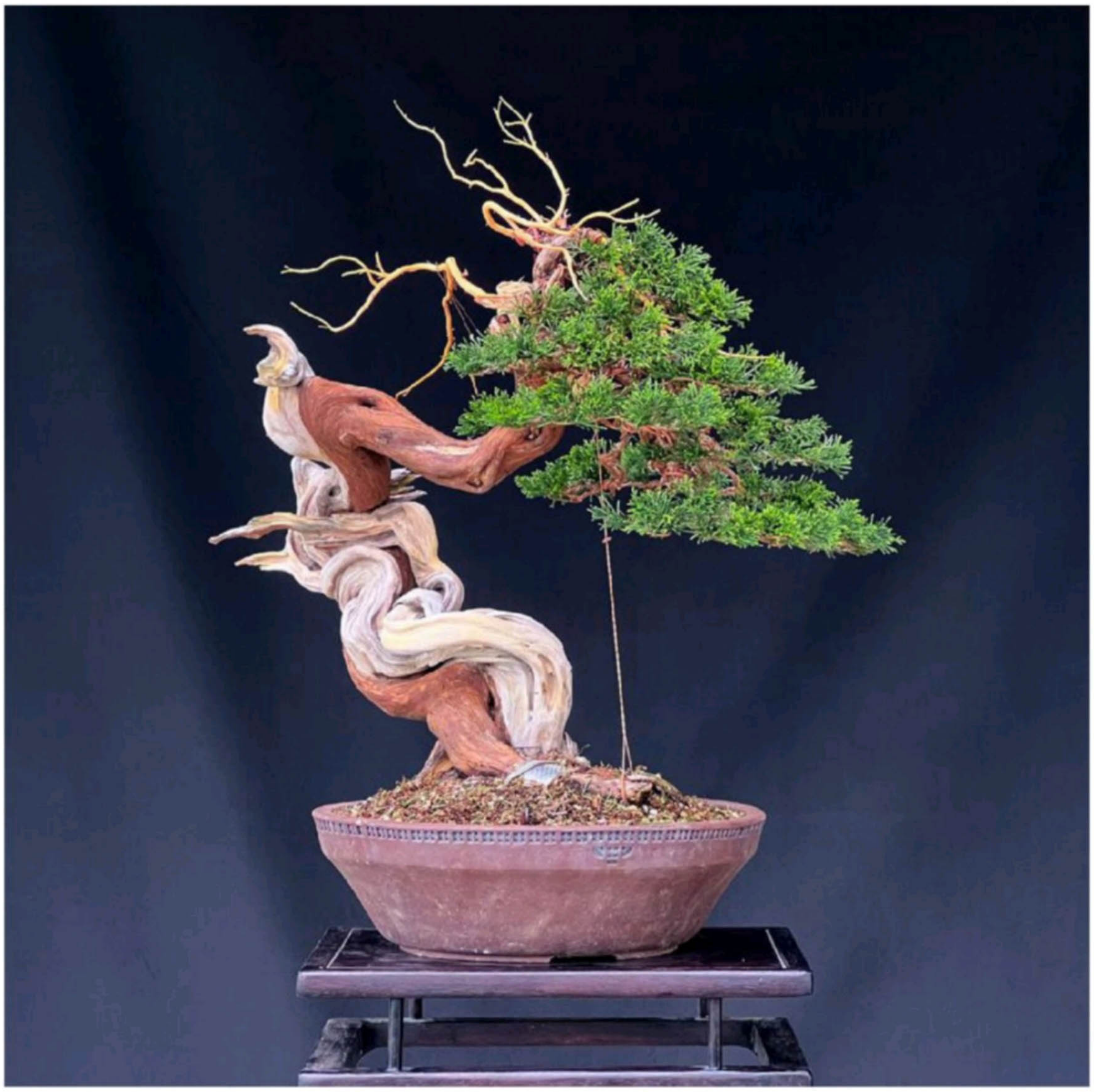
Finally

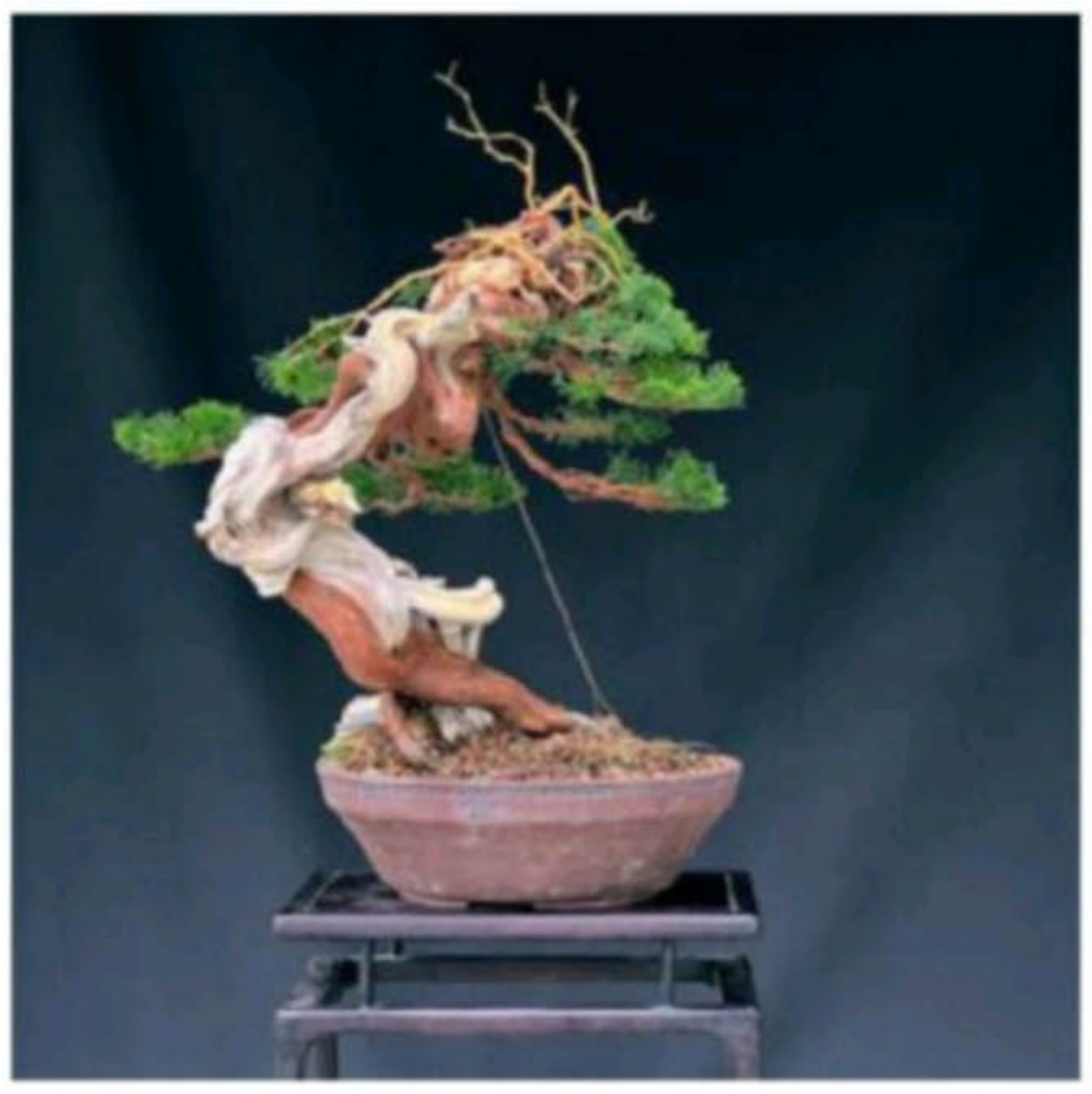
Although this is the first time the tree has been shaped, and it still needs to mature over the years, the juniper's compact green part, with its numerous jin, already allows the Sabina to reveal its strength and wild character.
Observing the photos taken before and during the work is always fascinating, and watching a tree's character slowly emerge is incredibly spectacular. Each tree tells its own story, shaped not only by the forces of nature but also by human interactions, friendships, and the passion of bonsai artisans.

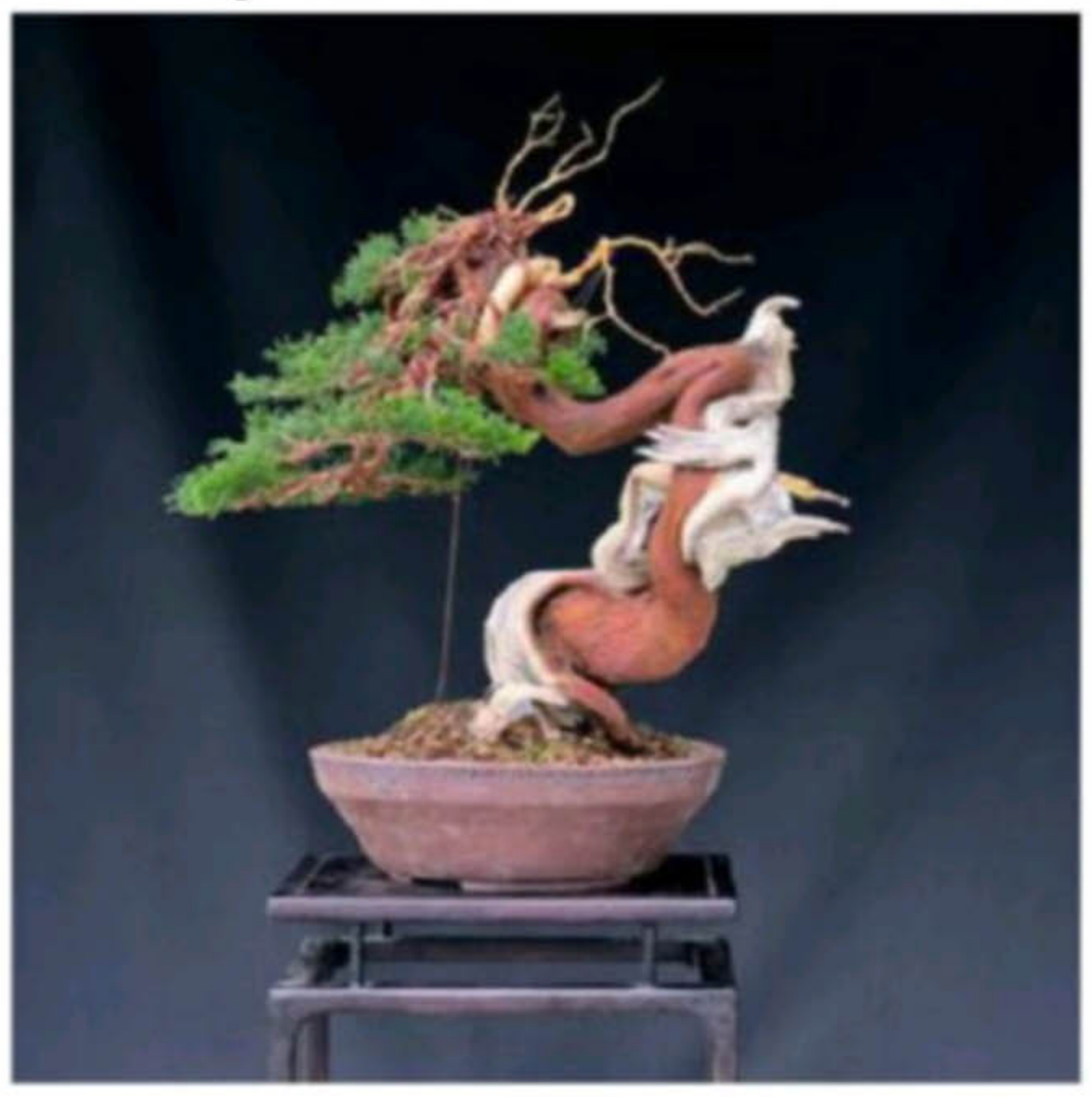
Luca (left) and myself, happy with the result so far


Seen from the right side

> ***Creating bonsai:***
> ***A delicate and meticulous art***


The front


Above: Back
Below: Left side



A Retrospective

Ryan Neil re-works the large juniper that he first styled four years ago

Text: Jelle Ferweda Photography: Bonsai Focus Studio, Jan Dieryck

This bulky *Juniperus chinensis* was originally intended to end up in a Japanese garden. Could it be made into a bonsai? Its huge proportions indicated that it would be a tough job, but Ryan Neil took up the challenge and it became a very elegant bonsai. The ingenious technique Ryan applied, of splitting and bending branches made it possible to create a very compact design. The tree was then returned to the garden of Bonsai Plaza and repotted in a square tokoname pot. During the following four years it developed dense branches.

It was when Maarten van der Hoeven of Bonsai Plaza was asked by The Trophy organising team about material that was available for demonstrations, the idea came to him to use this same juniper for one of Ryan's demos. Ryan responded positively, but also said that he had never carried out such a demo before. However, he would be excited to take the tree a step further. So, during the last edition of The Trophy the work on this juniper was carried out on stage.

Ryan looking back on the images of the demo four years ago

bonsai
Bonsai
Plaza

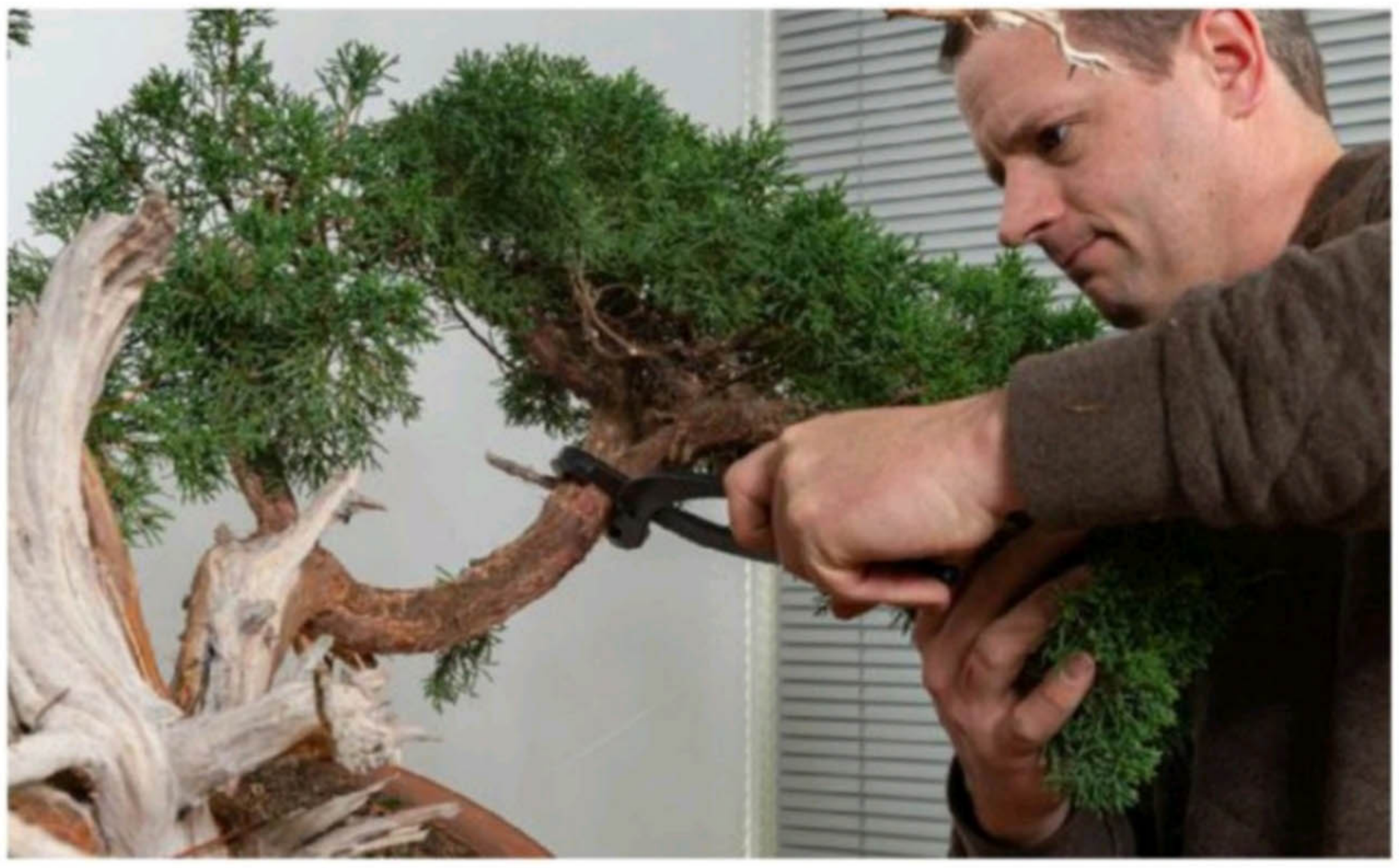
On-stage demo

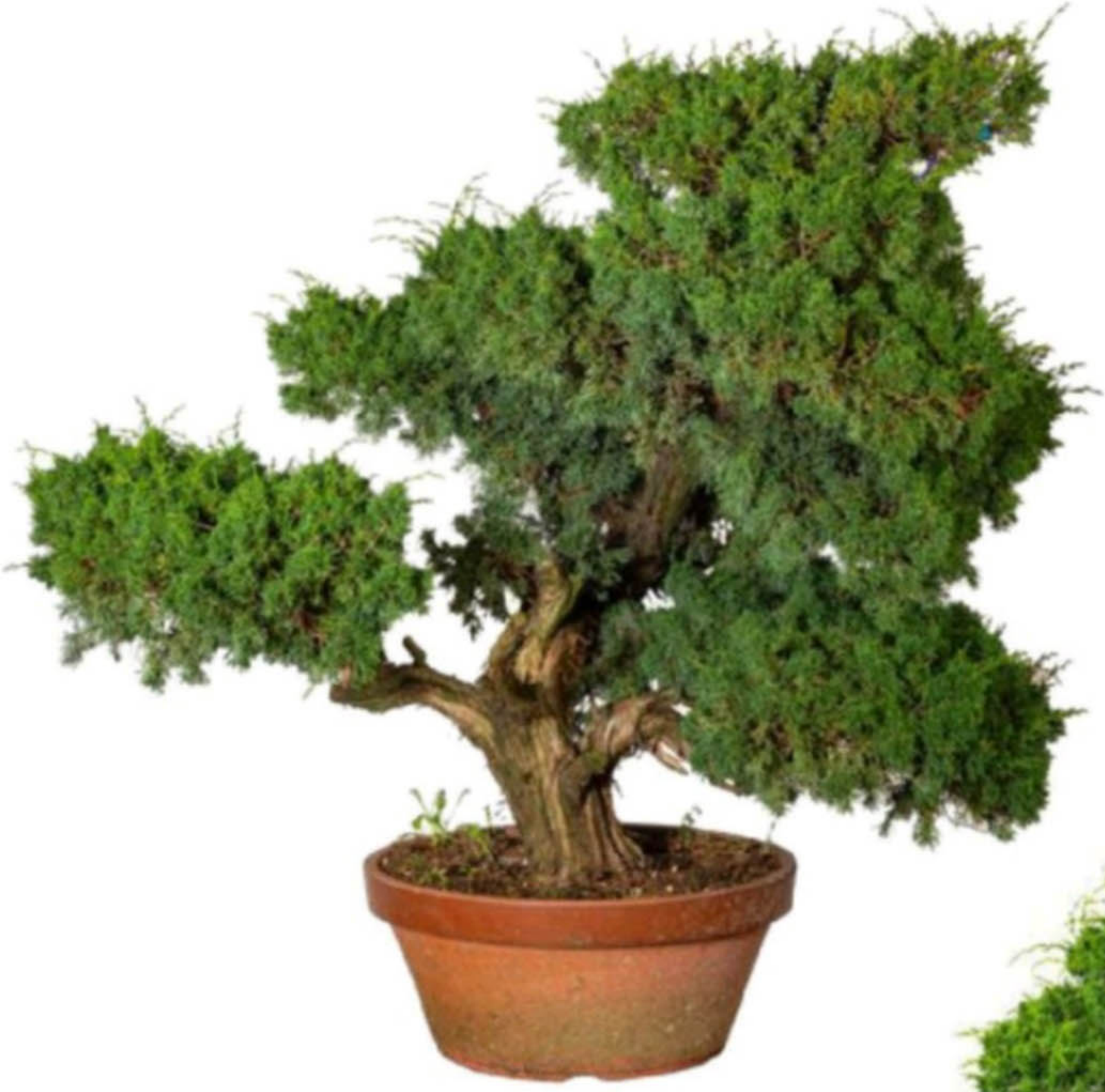
As part of the introduction, Ryan showed a set of photos taken during that initial styling and the drastic transformation that had taken place. The photos were from the article in the July - August 2020 issue of Bonsai Focus. He explained that a lot of work on a tree means that a significant time is needed for the tree to recover. So, over the last five years there was minimal work done, while it stood at Bonsai Plaza. The tree consequentially gained substantial amounts of foliage, enabling continuation of the styling. Now the foliage has grown lush and full. Too full indeed. This is a tree with a lot of deadwood, most of the upper trunk is dead. To have such a tree full of foliage is unnatural, and not reflecting the natural conditions under which large parts of a tree would die off. Ryan highlights this importance a number of times. Trees that reflect a harsh history typically have open, broken canopies. Therefore Ryan focused initially on reducing foliage.

This created a much more open canopy. He creates gaps in the foliage, allowing a view to back branches. On the other hand he aims to enhance the directional flow of the canopy. After the styling, the tree is much more open and now has a distinct left-to-right movement.

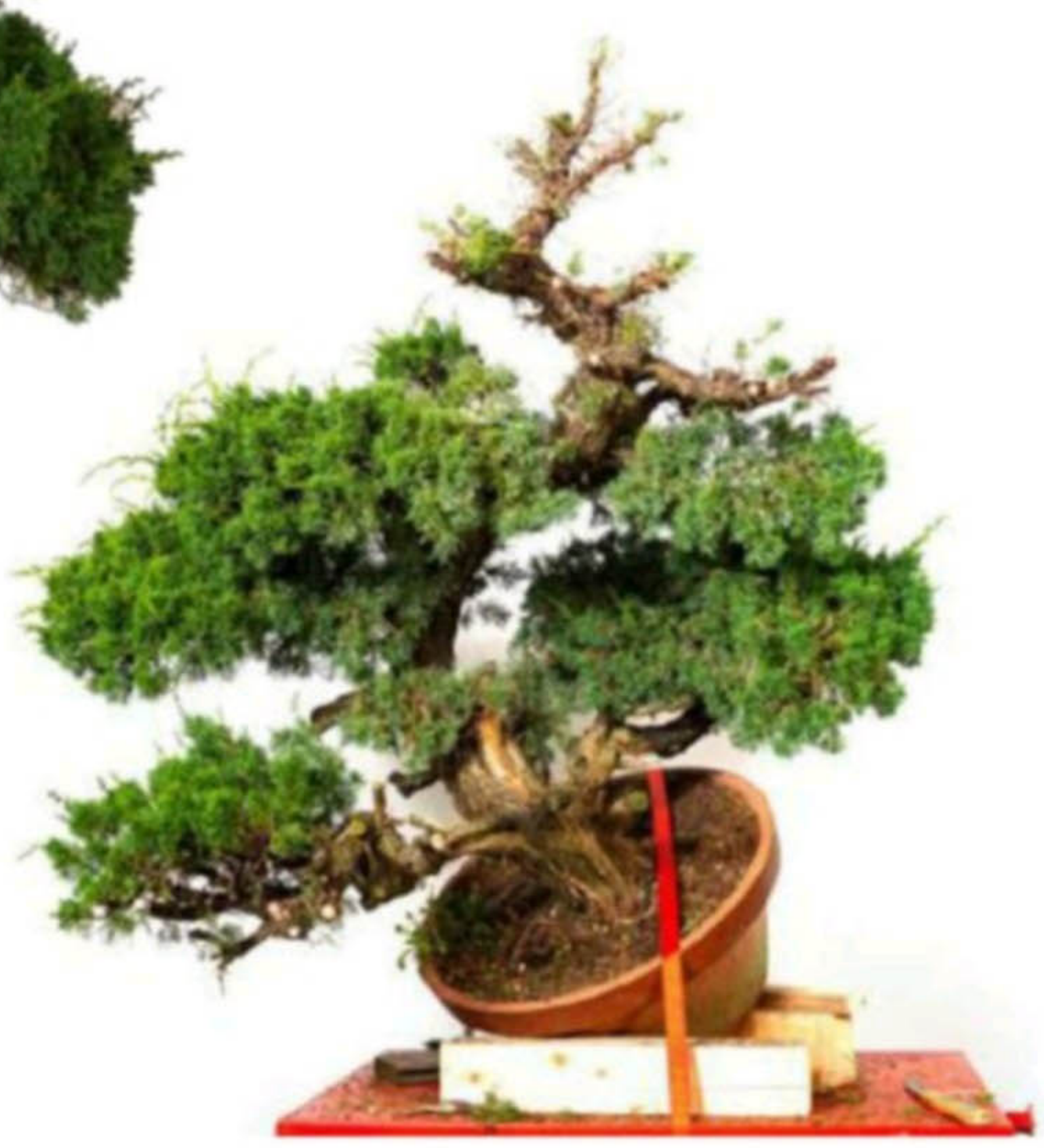
Discussions

During the demos some long discussions took place. One of them highlighting the importance of using proper substrate: The problem with poor substrate and poor watering regimes were also discussed, where Ryan highlights how too little gas

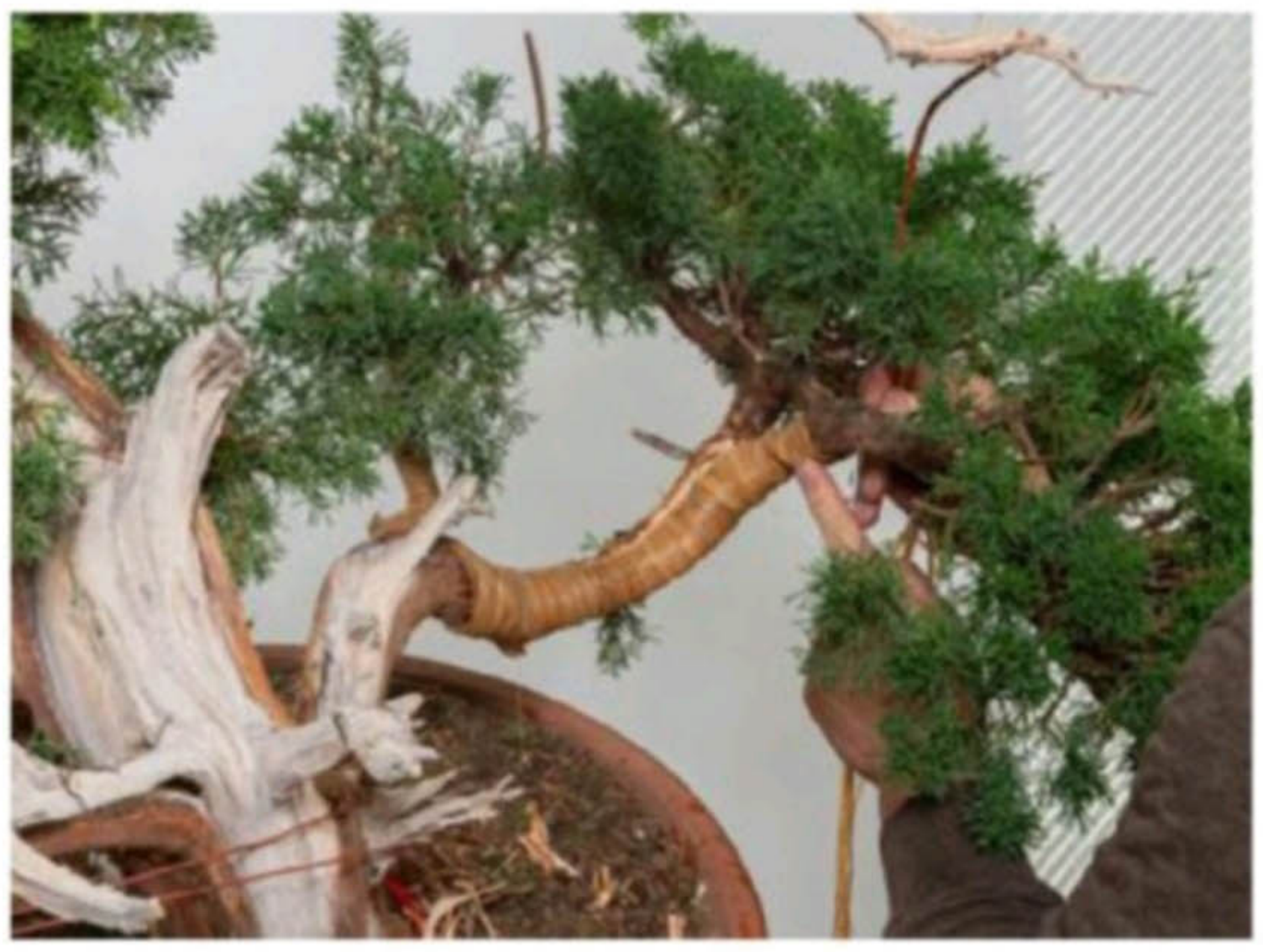




The situation before any work was done



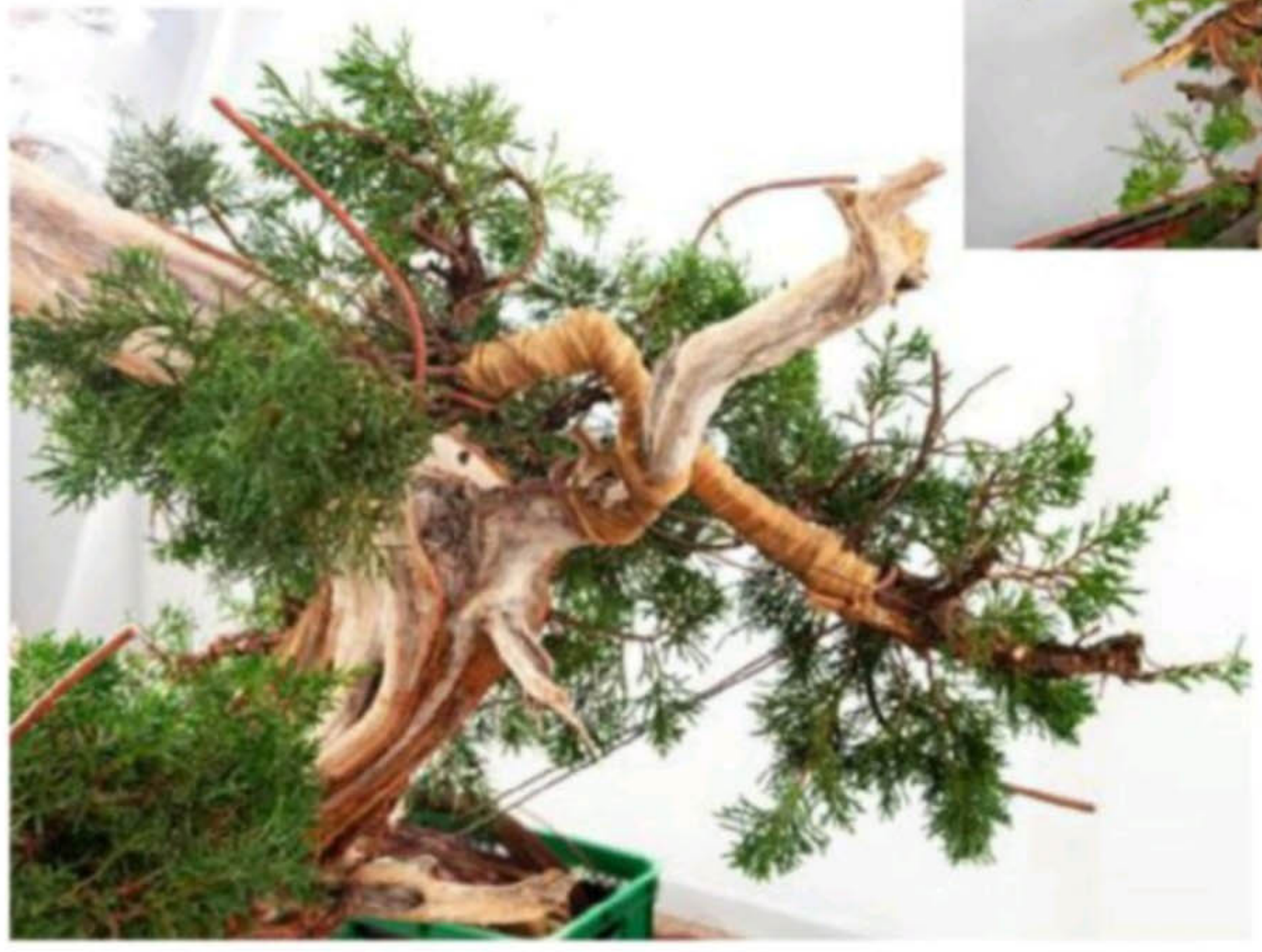
It was tilted to the left, thereby lowering the left branch, too

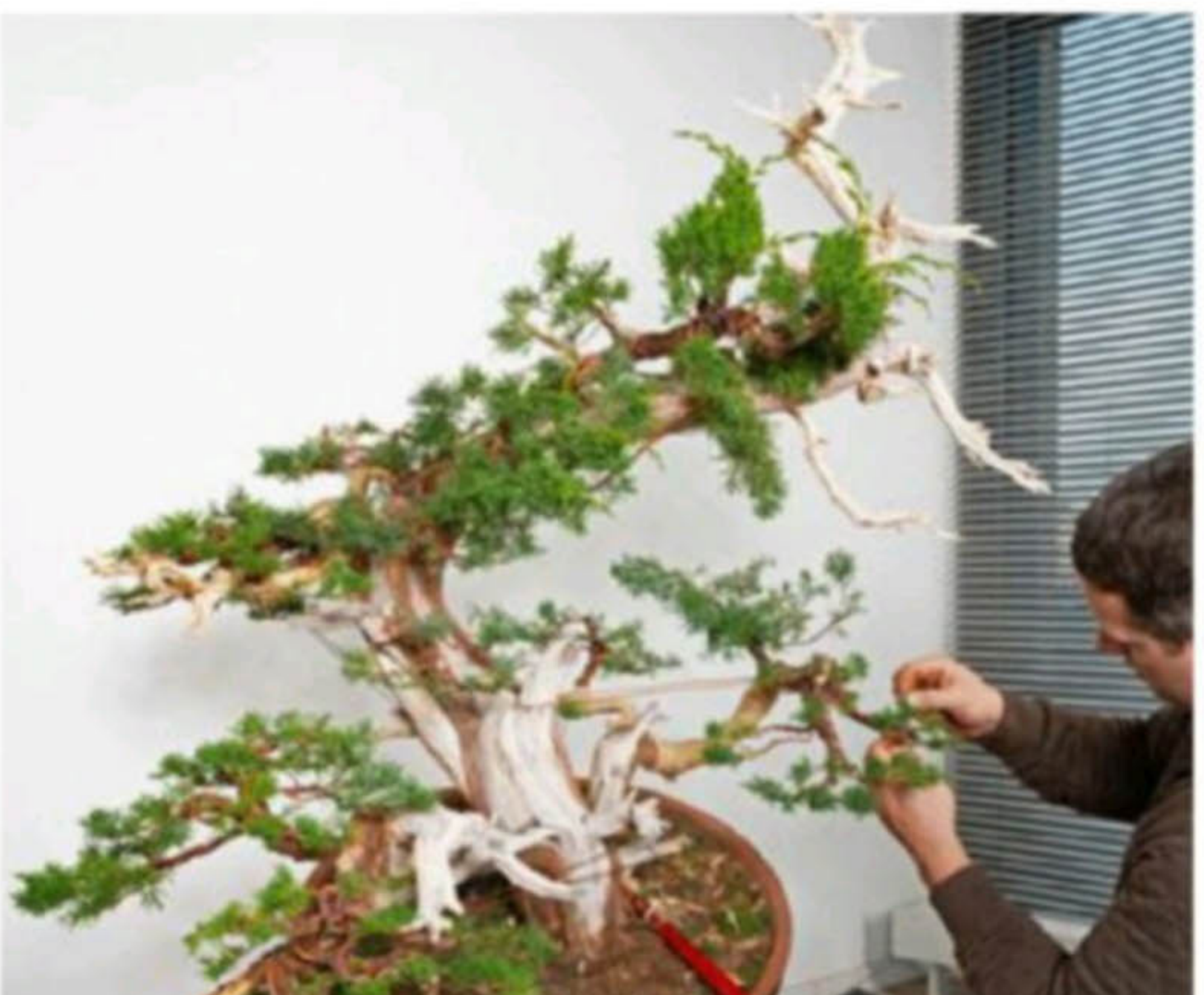


A very chunky branch, the foliage of which extended far out. To be able to bend the branch it was split and the core wood was removed

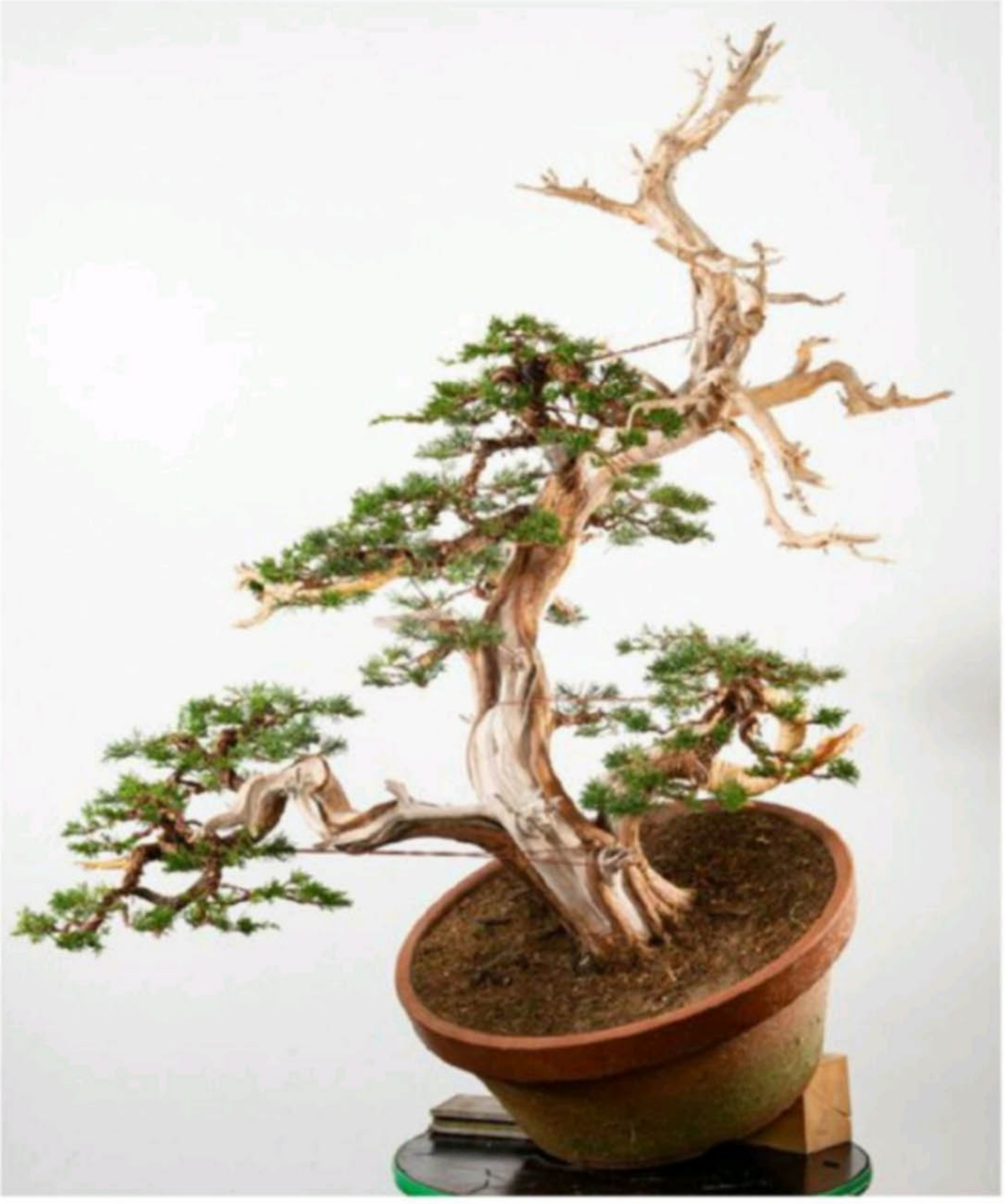
> **The ingenious technique Ryan applied of splitting and bending, made it all possible**

Seen from the back, also shortening the thick branches by bending them

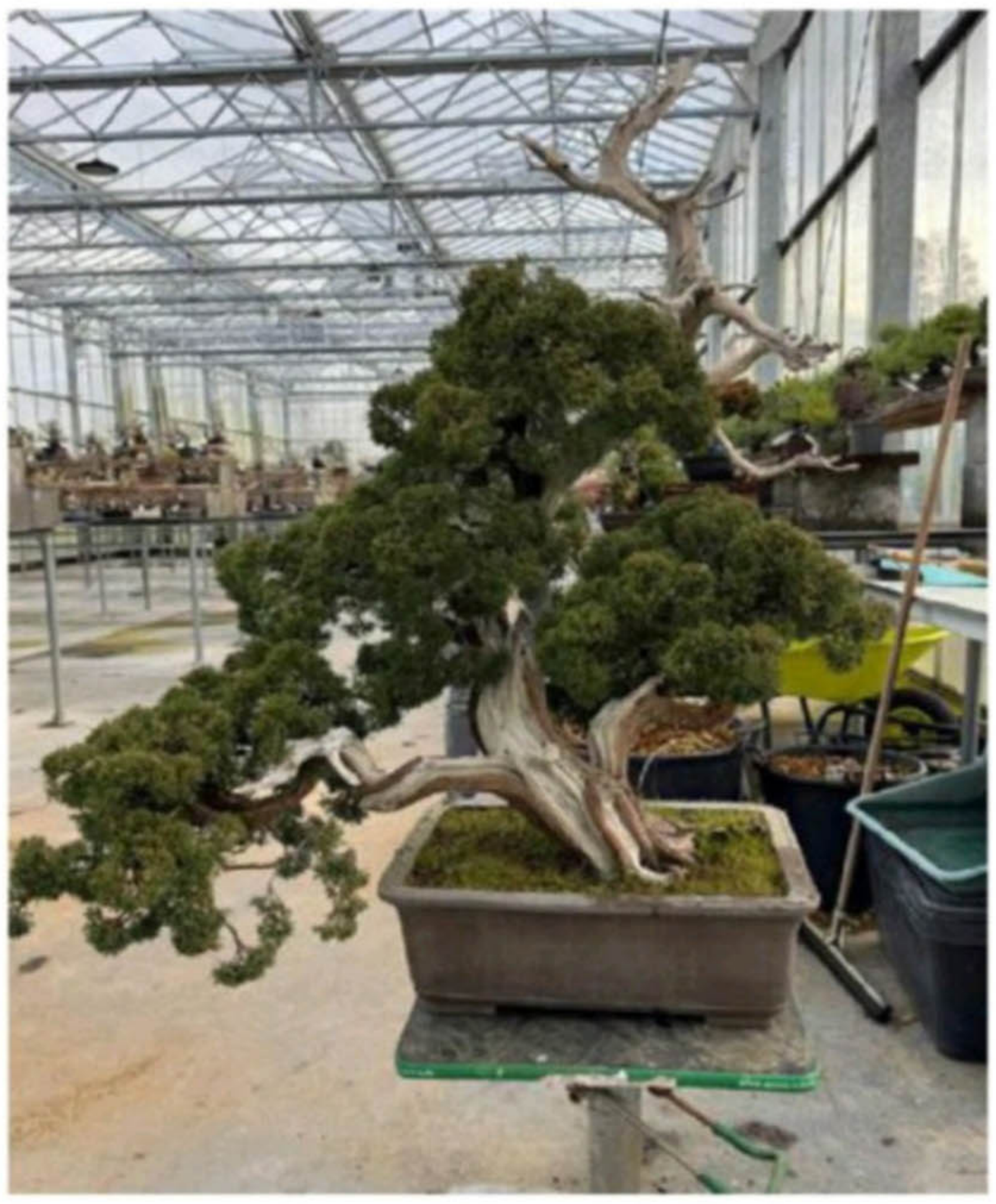




After hours of wiring, the shape of the tree became visible



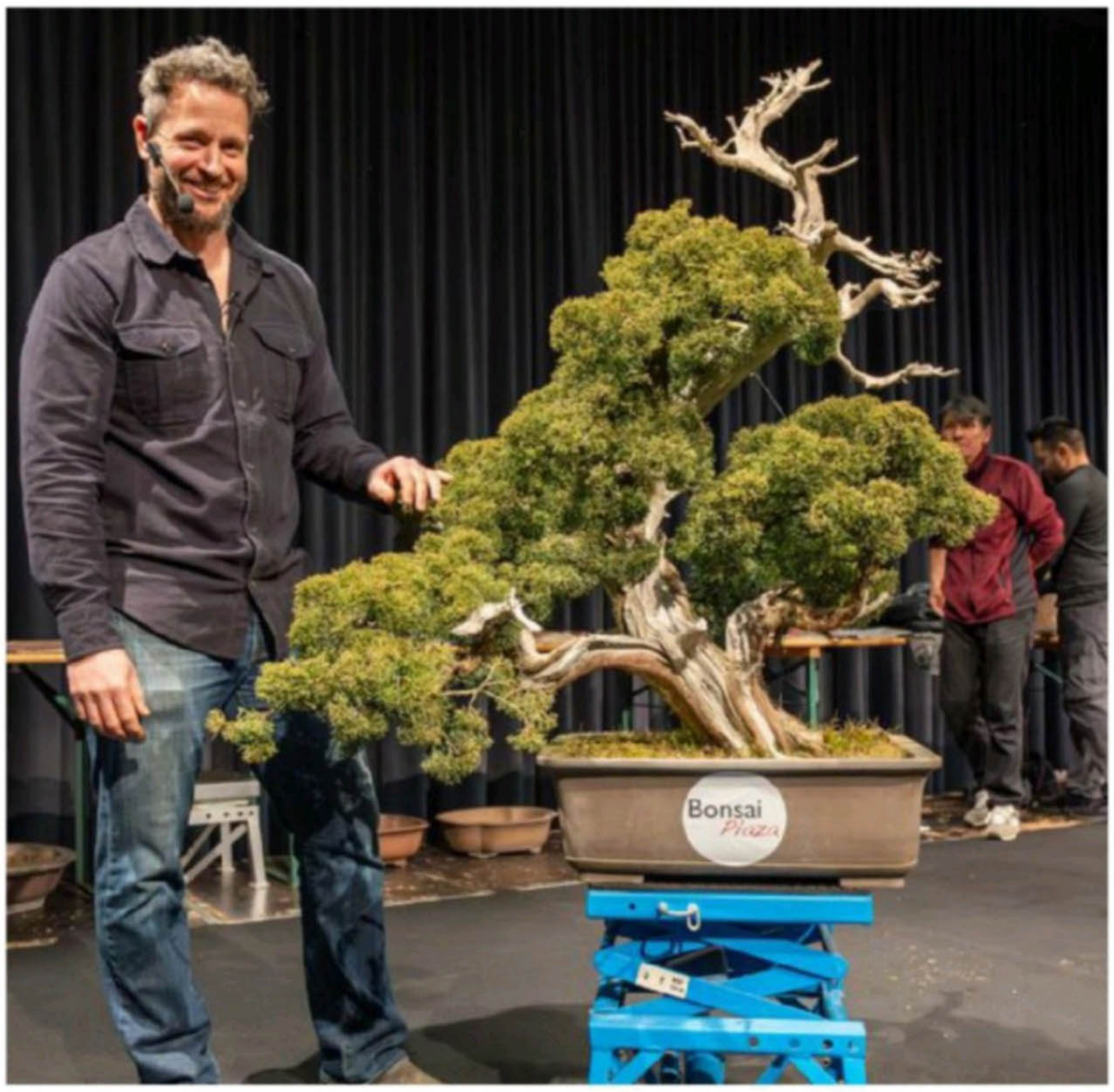
The tree after the long hours of work in February 2020



The situation in January 2025, the tree had been repotted a year after the initial demo

Retrospective: Ryan explains how he managed to make the top jin look thinner

> **A tree full of foliage and much deadwood is not natural, and does not reflect natural conditions**



The foliage has grown lush and full

Re-working the top area, which has moved further to the left

After re-positioning the main branches, detail work is complete

exchange at the root level means the roots cannot metabolize the sugars. These sugars provide energy, the 'food' to the roots, which are therefore left without energy to sustain themselves when the rootball is saturated with water, that has a slow gas exchange. Good substrate left to dry slightly will allow for proper gas exchange and the roots have oxygen to use available sugars. For this to happen, it is important the rootball is not saturated, particularly as temperatures are high enough to sustain root development. The advice is to allow the root area to slightly dry during wet phases.

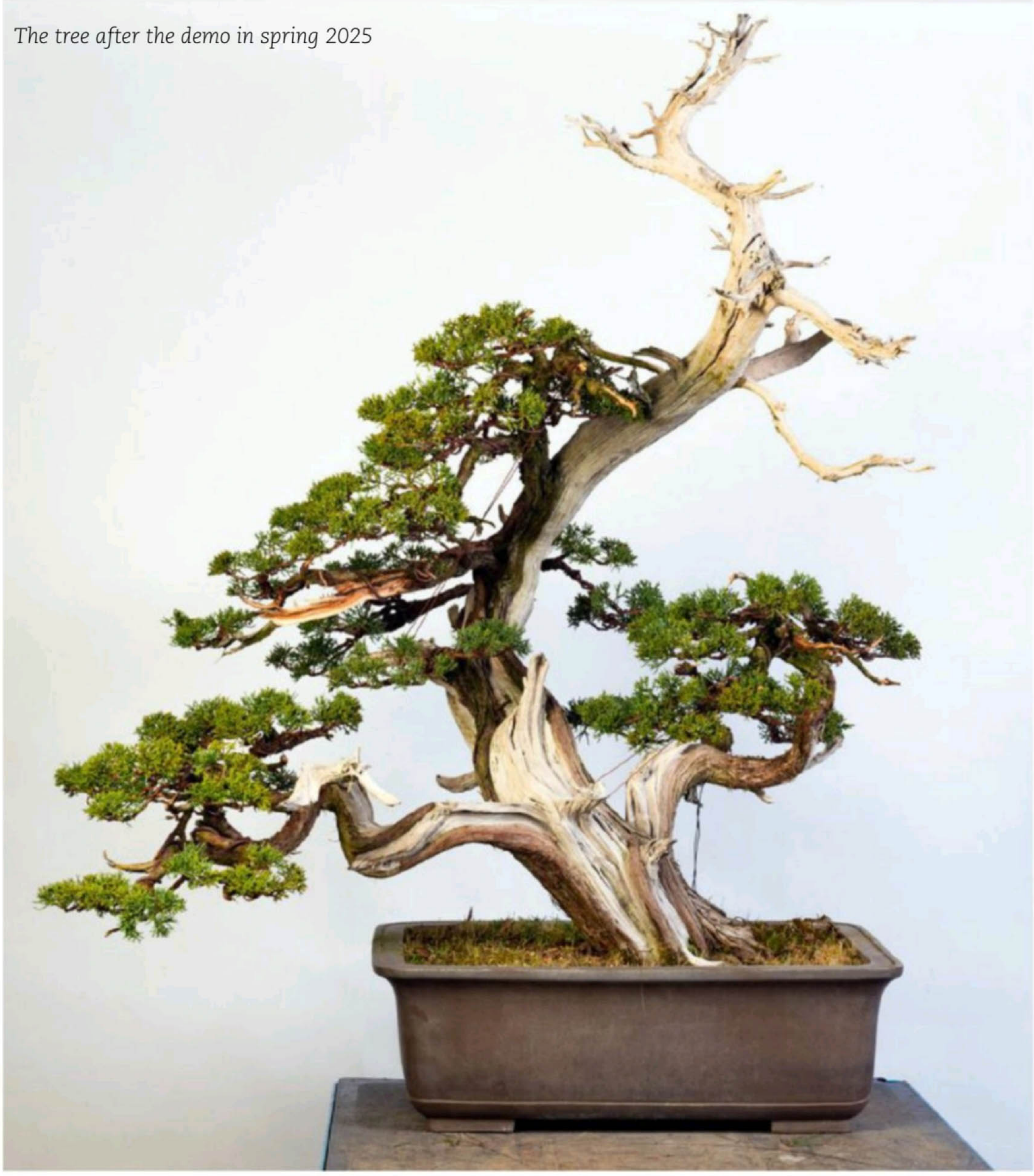
Ryan considers that Akadama is the key component to getting short internodes and gentle growth patterns. Key to this is the tubular structure of the clay particles in Akadama, and the manganese (Mn) contained in them. Manganese reduces the internode length and in this way supports development of highly-ramified branch structures.

From the audience, a question arose on what the health risks of these demos are. There was a concern that many trees styled during demos will die. Ryan, Mauro and Koji reflected on this. It is clear that this sort of styling of trees in front of an audience is not common in Japan and, if it is done, the trees are prepared for a long time. Going from raw stock into a tree is a process that is not normally shown in this way. Also, in the last decade in US and Europe, audiences have begun to become more mature in the sense that they have grown an awareness that this massive styling, pruning wiring, bending and repotting in one session can cause death for the tree. Although spectacular, this is not how bonsai is done. So there is a tendency to be more conservative in the work undertaken. Each of the artists confirms: This is how we would work our trees in our workshop. We do nothing that would risk longevity of the tree. Naturally, proper aftercare is needed: These trees will be kept frost-free for the rest of the season. As such, there is no risk for the long-term health of the tree Although admittedly, a styling session is stressful for a tree!

Bonsai
Bonsa

Seen from the right side, the large lower branch has developed very naturally

The tree after the demo in spring 2025



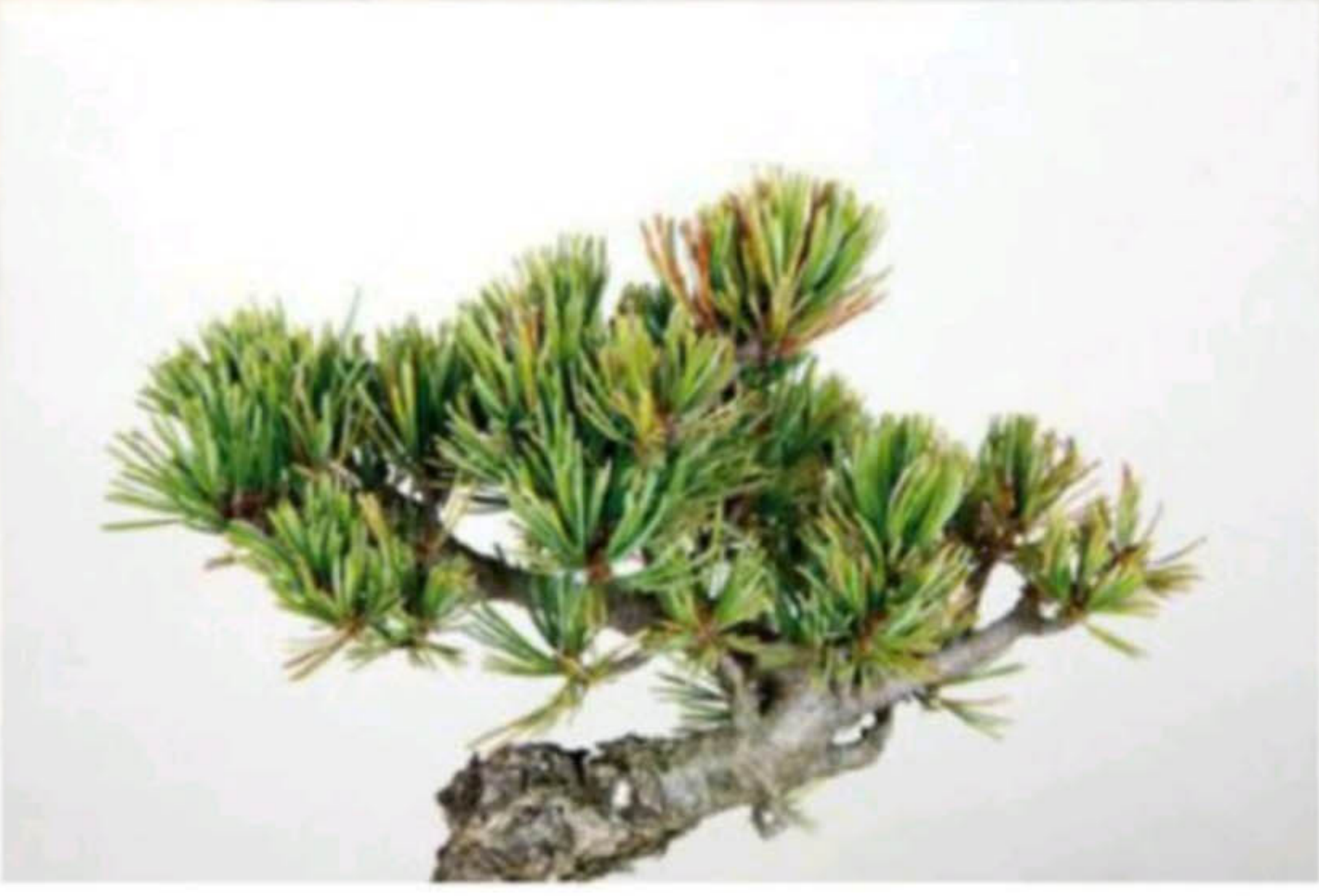
Too hot or too dry

Bonsai can be in trouble during the summer. Here's what you can do

Text and photography: Kinbon, Japan

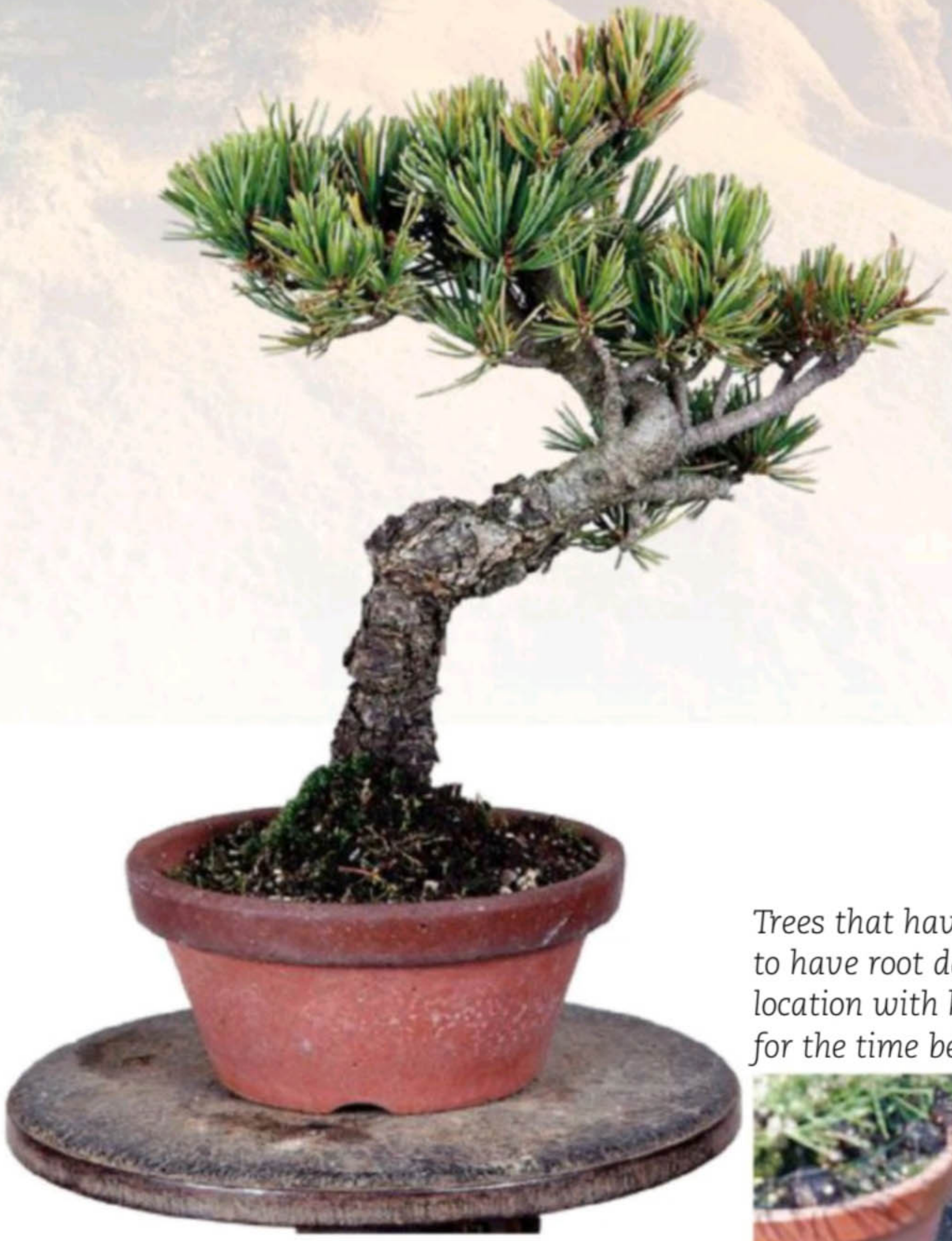
How to detect or deal with overheated trees and avoid any further damage. Using actual examples, we will show you what you can expect and what to do

A white pine with burnt needles

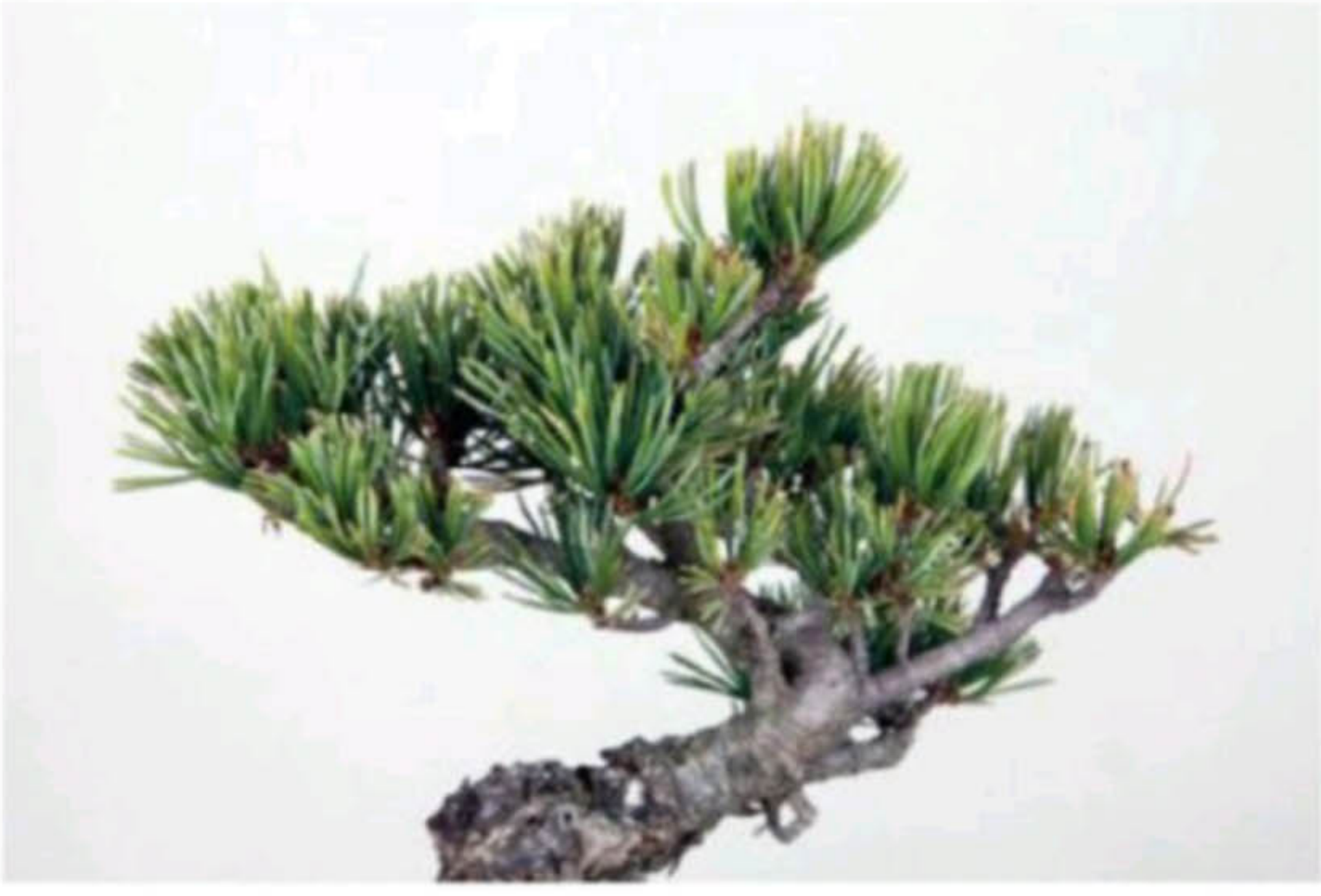


The green leaf colour has faded, and symptoms of leaf scorch, such as partial browning, can be seen. Since this Japanese five-needle pine has no drainage issues and only a few leaves have turned brown, the scorched leaves were removed, and the tree was moved to a different shelf for observation. If removing the scorched leaves significantly reduces the foliage, it is better to leave the discoloured leaves alone and manage the tree in a location where direct sunlight can be avoided, such as under a shade cloth or a shelf. If the tree has poor drainage, transferring it to a larger pot can improve the growing conditions (see example further on).

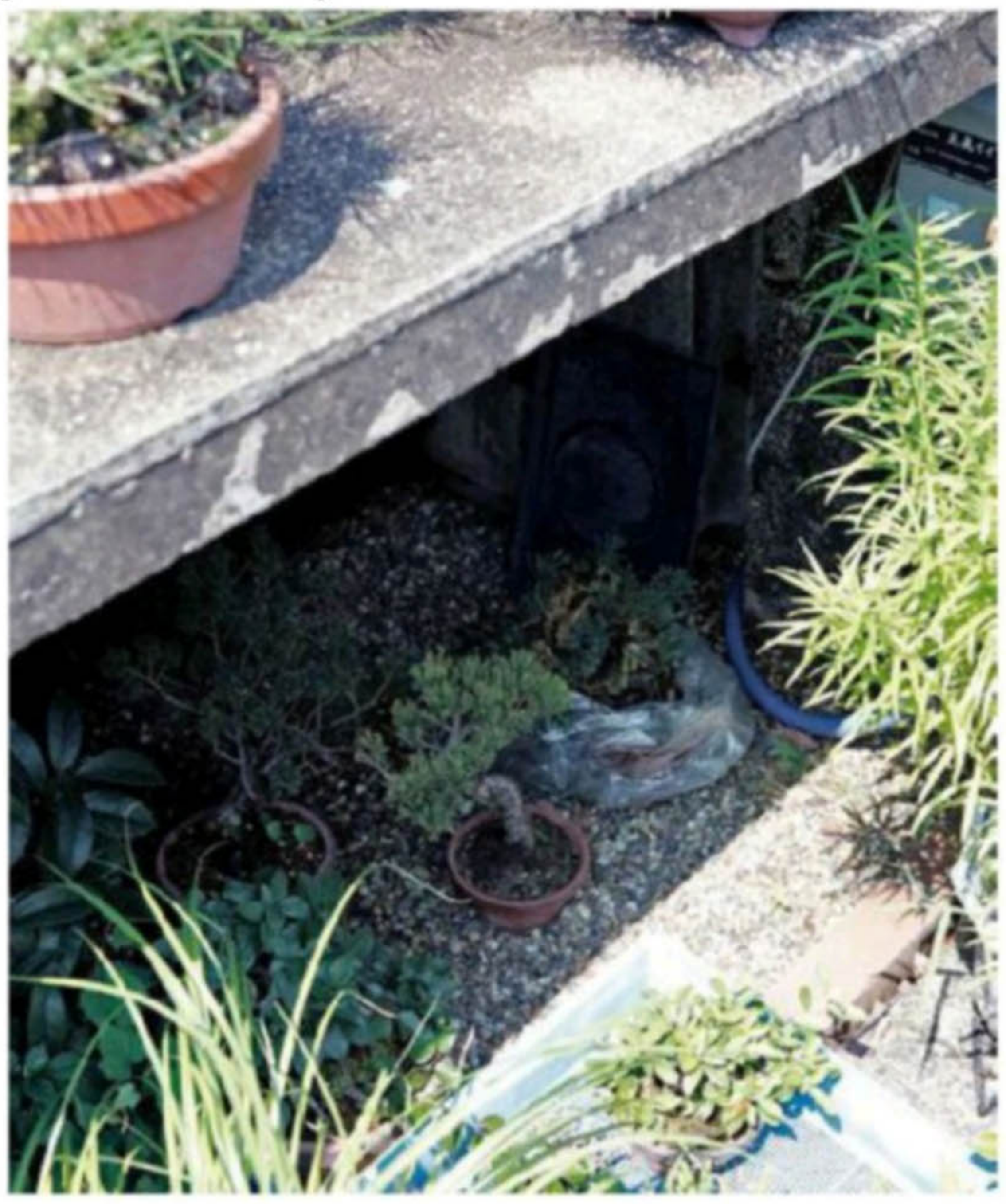
The new buds are growing well, but some leaves have begun turning reddish-brown. If the overall leaf colour turns yellow and some parts become brown, there is a high

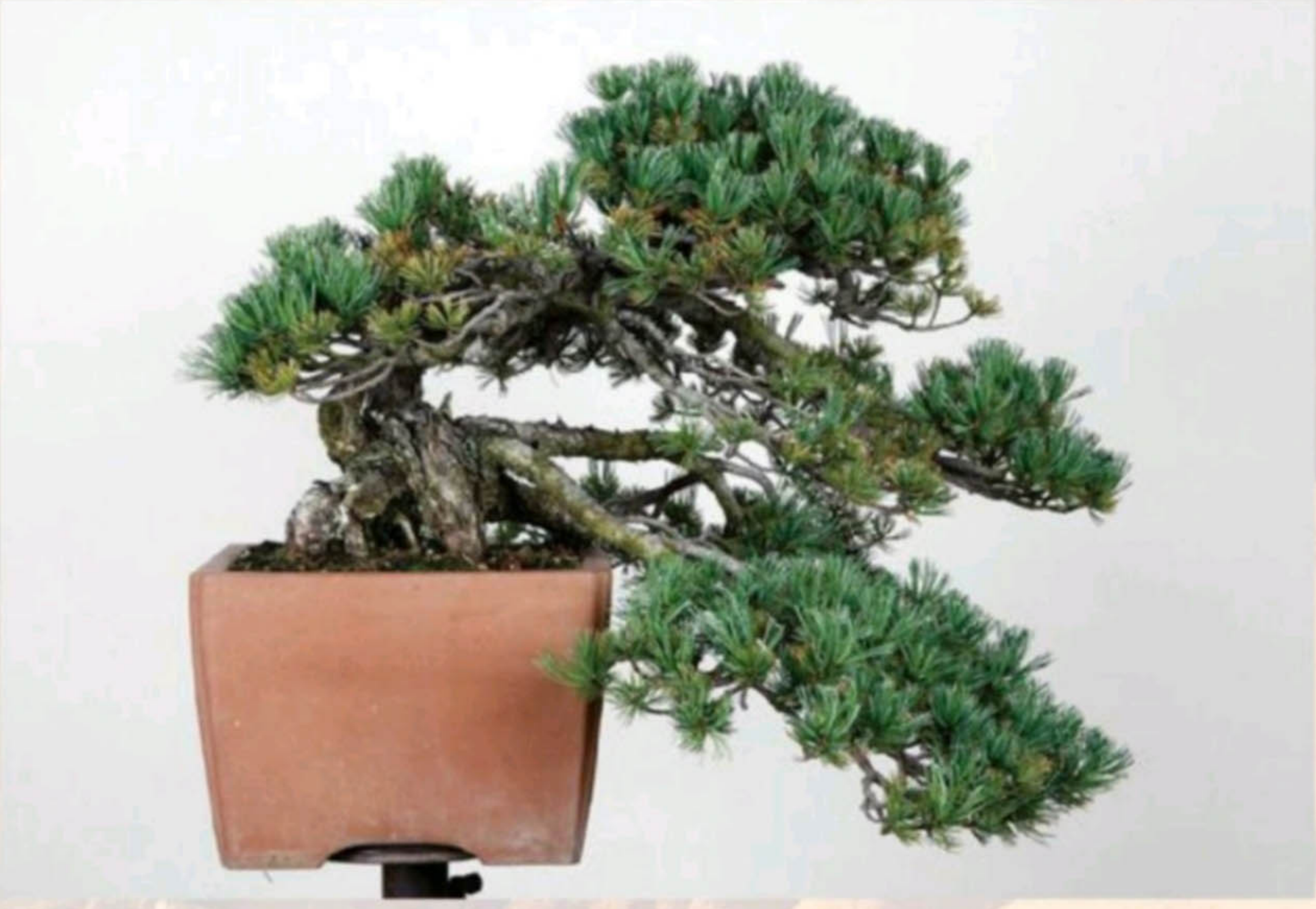


Above: Example of a white pine where the needles have turned yellow Below: The scorched leaves have been removed

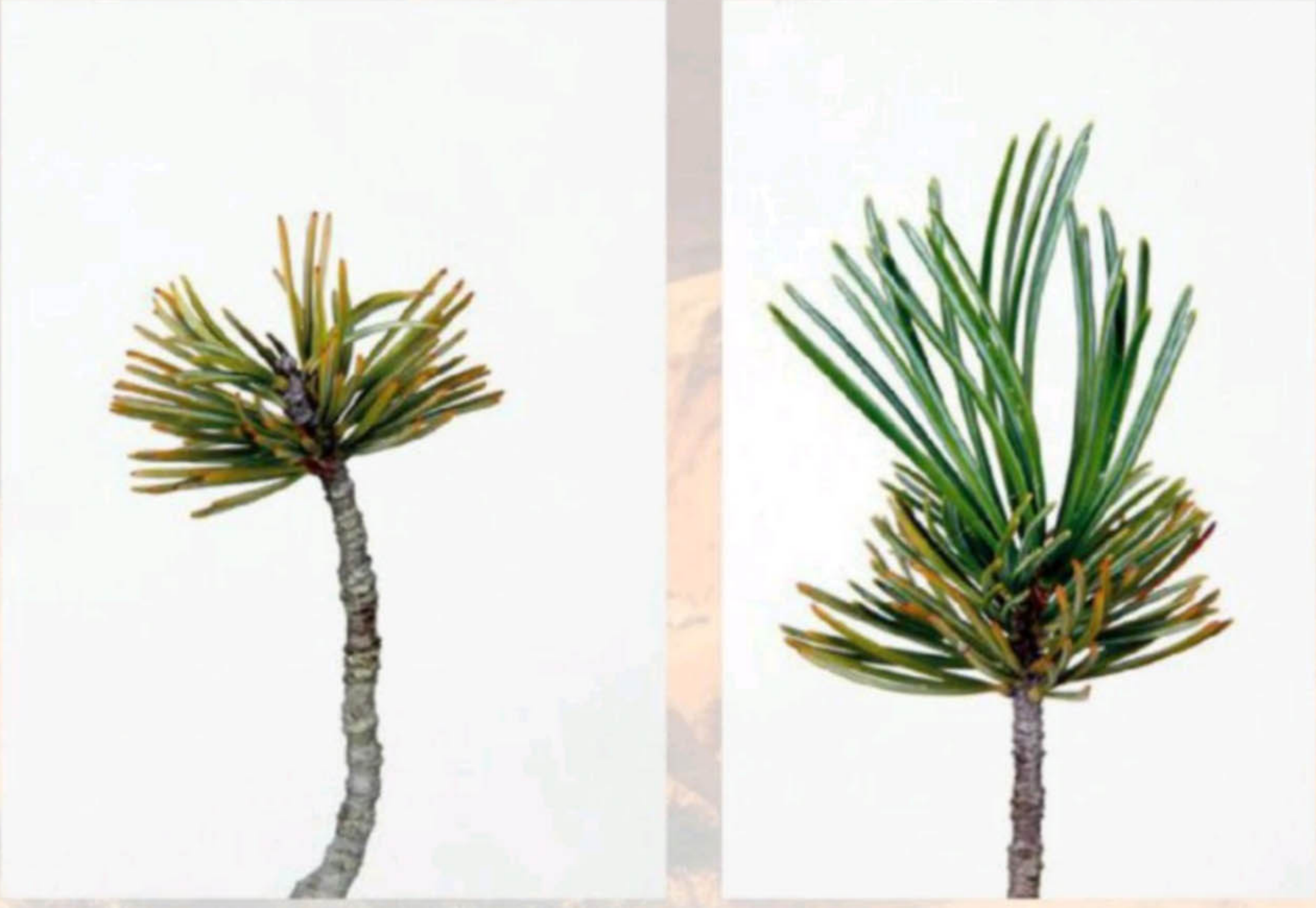


Trees that have suffered leaf scorch are highly likely to have root damage. It is best to manage them in a location with high humidity, such as under a shelf, for the time being



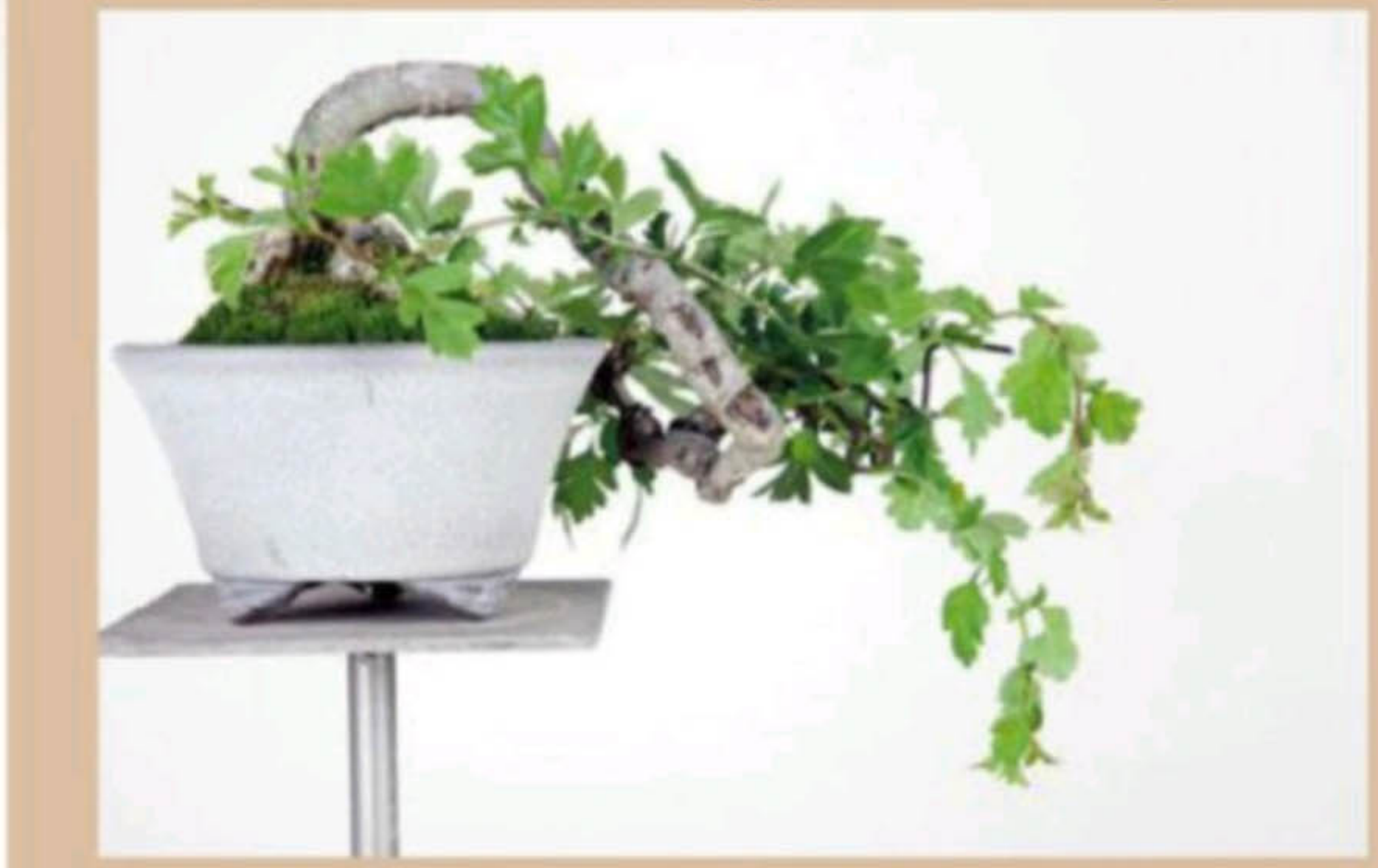


An example of a five-needle pine in its second year after experiencing leaf scorch. Since the symptoms were severe, work was minimized last year to focus on cultivation. The brown leaves are from the previous year, while the green ones are from this year. Although the inner buds are still weak, signs of recovery are visible. However, to ensure full recovery, no work will be done for another year



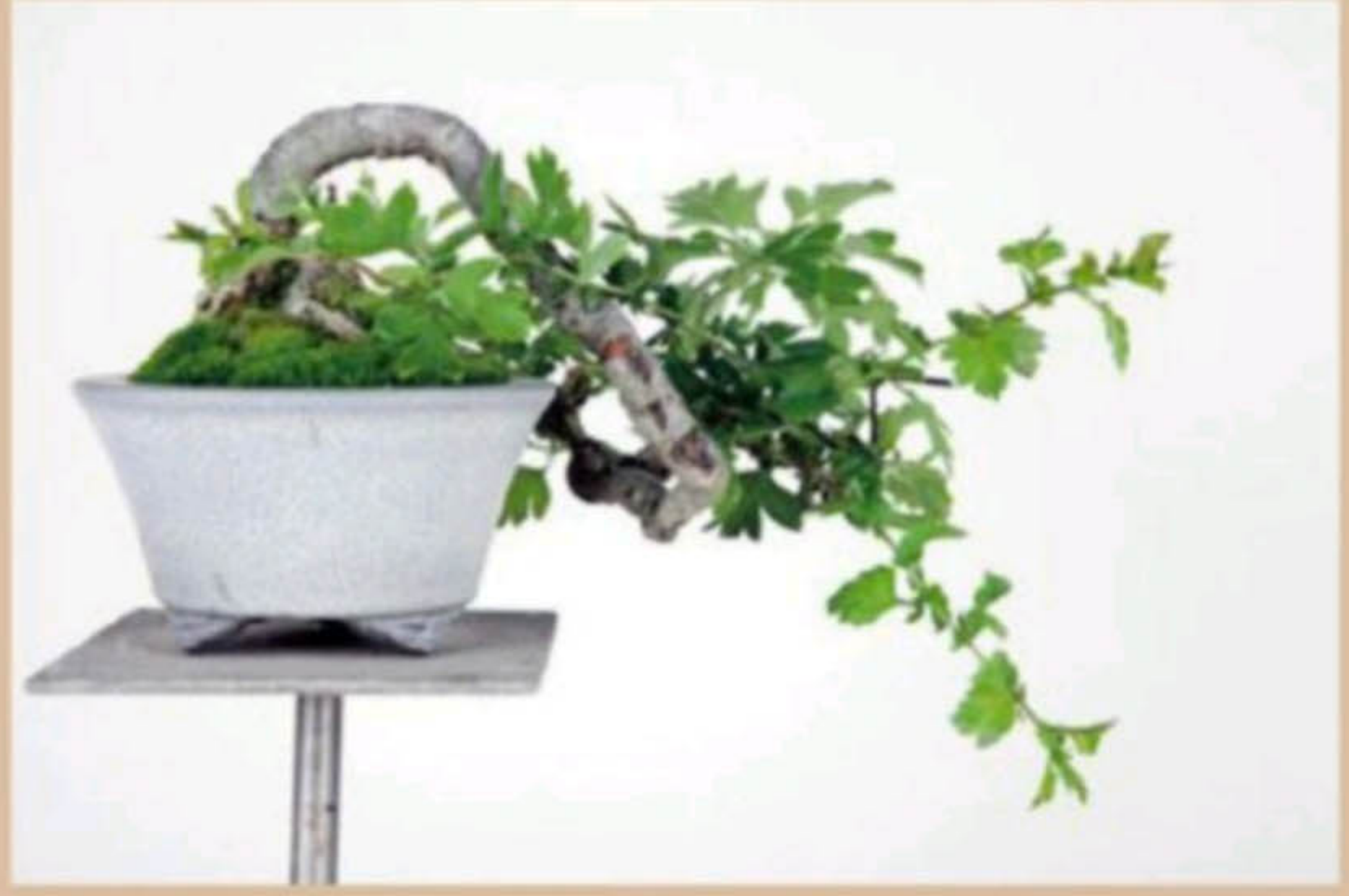
Below: Branches that are beginning to recover and branches where no new buds are visible Below left: In the vigorous crown area, green new shoots are growing steadily, but the weaker inner buds appear dormant and are likely to wither away if they do not sprout

Don't miss the signs of dehydration that appear at the tips of the leaves



There is no issue with the leaf colour, but the leaf tips are lacking vitality and are drooping. This is a sign that the tree, a hawthorn, is on the verge of water stress

If the drought is at this level, there is likely no root damage yet, so water should be given immediately to promote recovery. If the drainage is poor, it is possible to submerge the pot in a bucket filled with water



30 minutes after watering and the branches have recovered and look healthy again

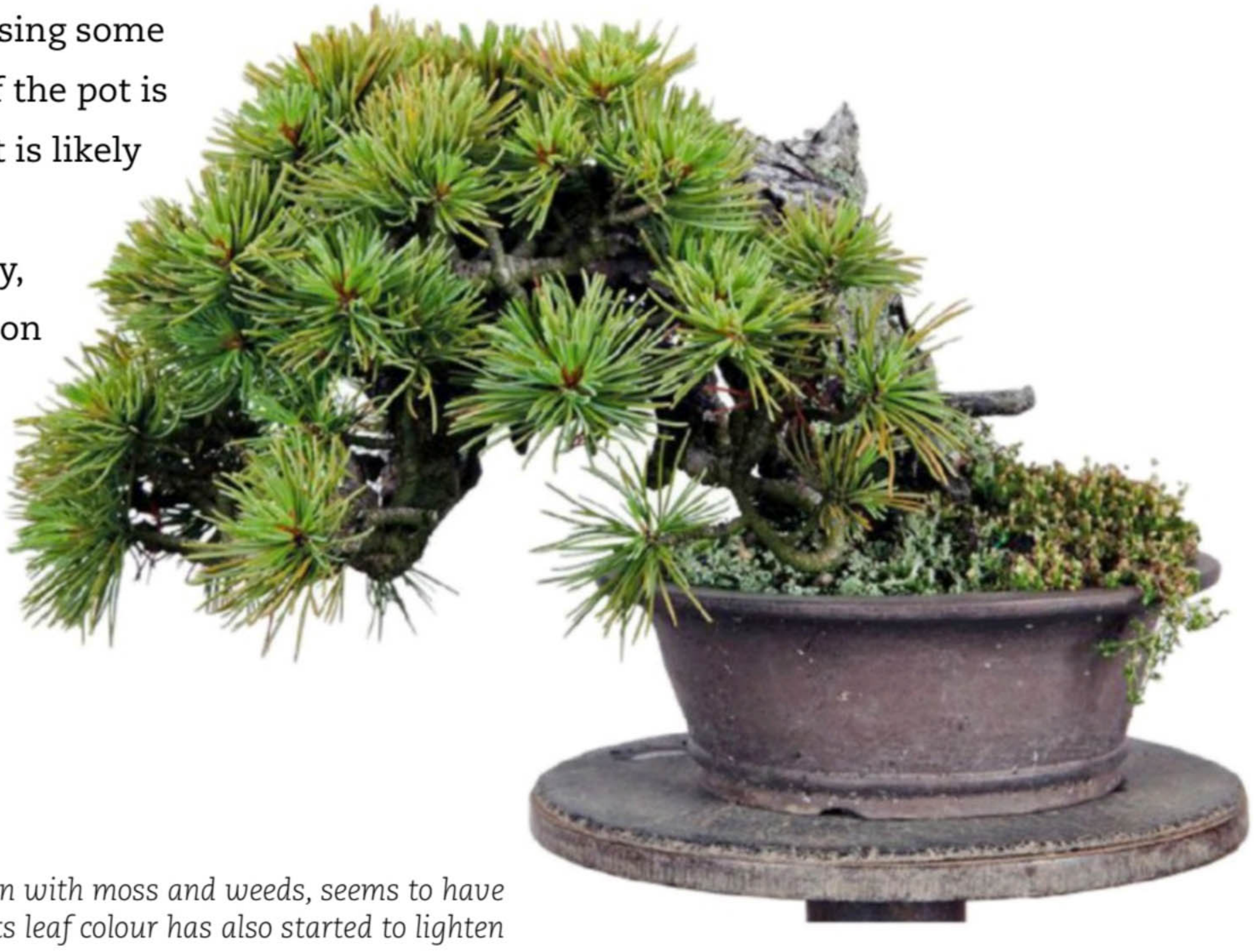
possibility of underwatering. Since the symptoms are still mild, only the brown, scorched leaves were removed selectively, and the tree was placed in partial shade for monitoring.

If some leaf discolouration has already occurred, there is a high chance that root problems have also developed. Do not overwater out of concern for the tree, thinking it will help. Instead, the water management must be monitored with care to reduce the stress on the tree, and repotting should be done in the optimal seasons of autumn or early spring.

Addressing poor water drainage in a five-needle pine through repotting

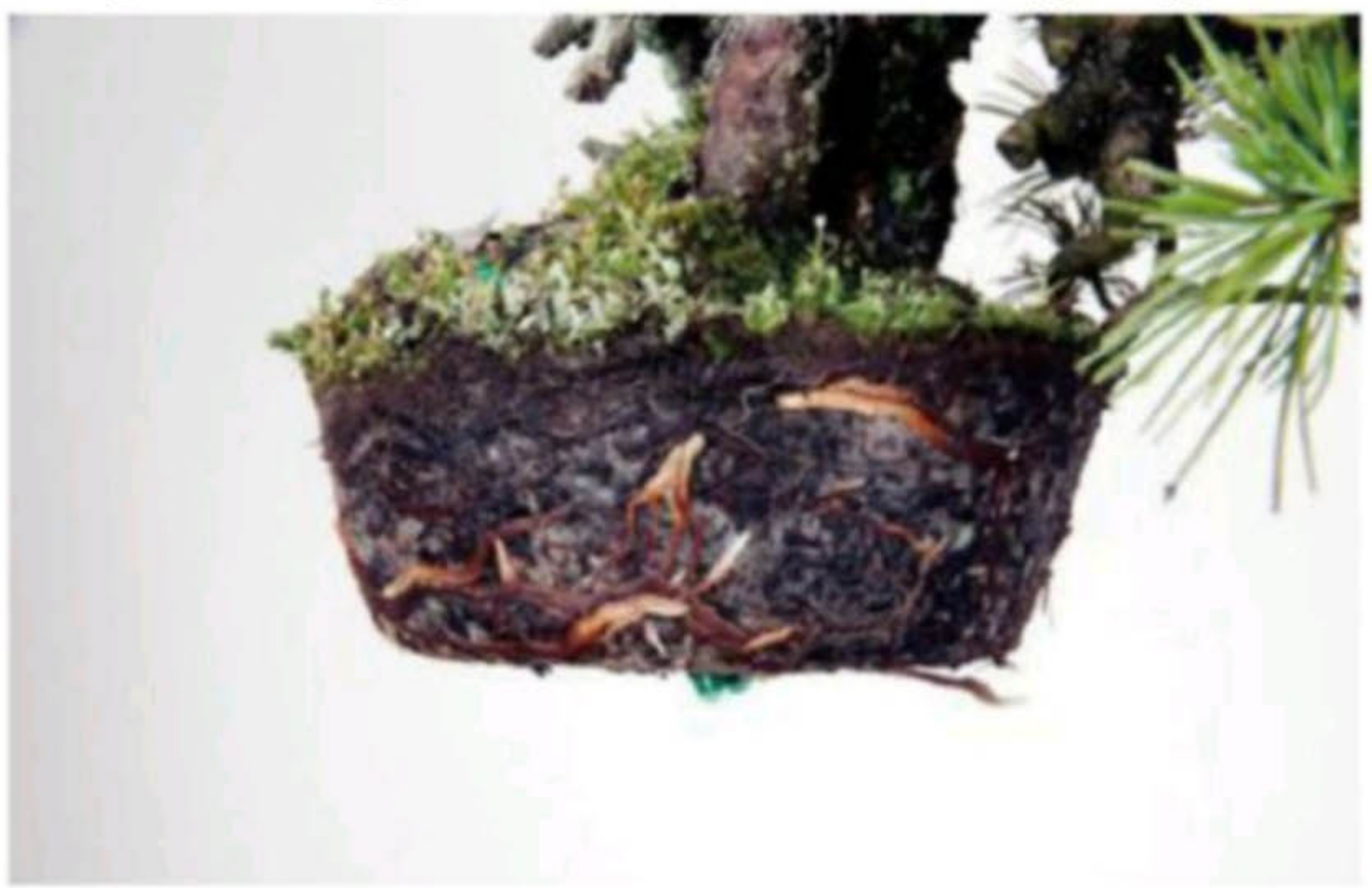
The five-needle pine has not yet shown symptoms of leaf scorch, but its leaf colour has started to weaken, raising some concern about potential water stress. The surface of the pot is covered with a large amount of weed and moss that is likely blocking proper water drainage.

For trees that are showing signs of weakened vitality, it's usually best to refrain from any work and focus on cultivation. However, in this case, the condition of the surface soil requires prompt improvement. In the first instance, only the moss-covered surface soil was removed, and the root ball was left intact. The tree was then repotted into a larger pot so as to improve the growing conditions.

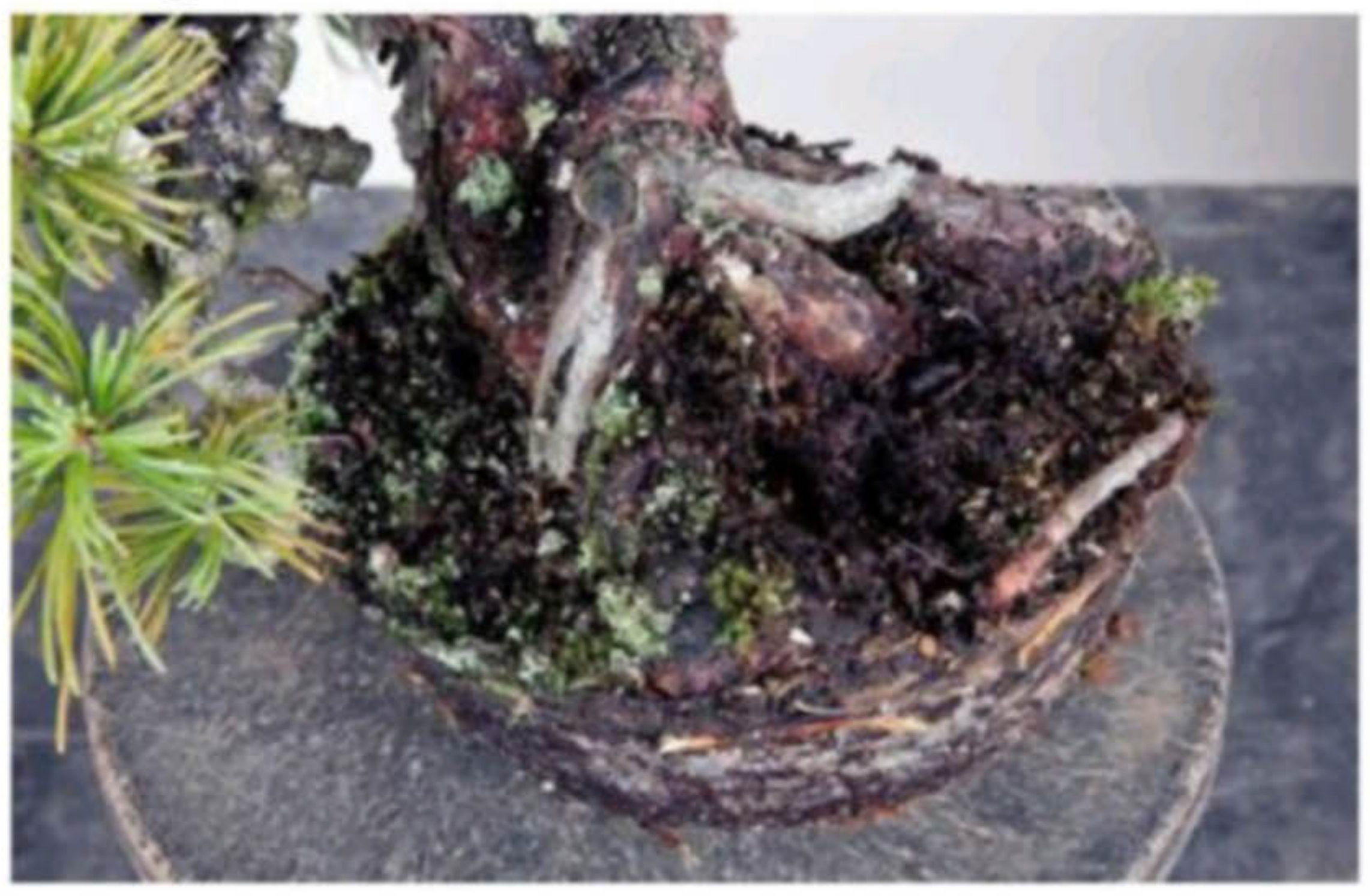


The five-needle pine, overgrown with moss and weeds, seems to have poor water drainage, and its leaf colour has also started to lighten

Repotting without damaging or cutting the roots

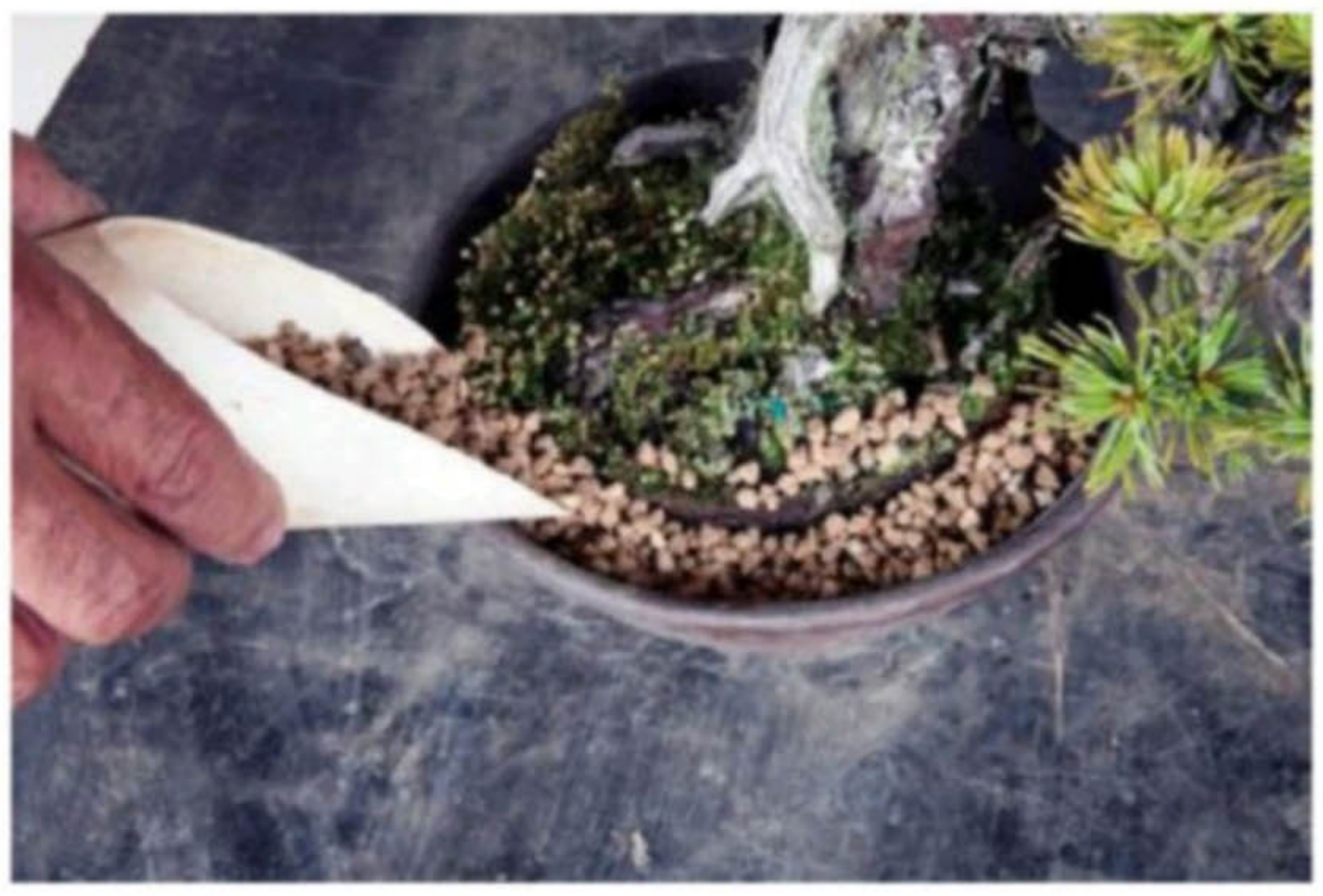


The condition after removing it from the pot. While small roots are visible, the soil around the base is damp and not in an ideal condition

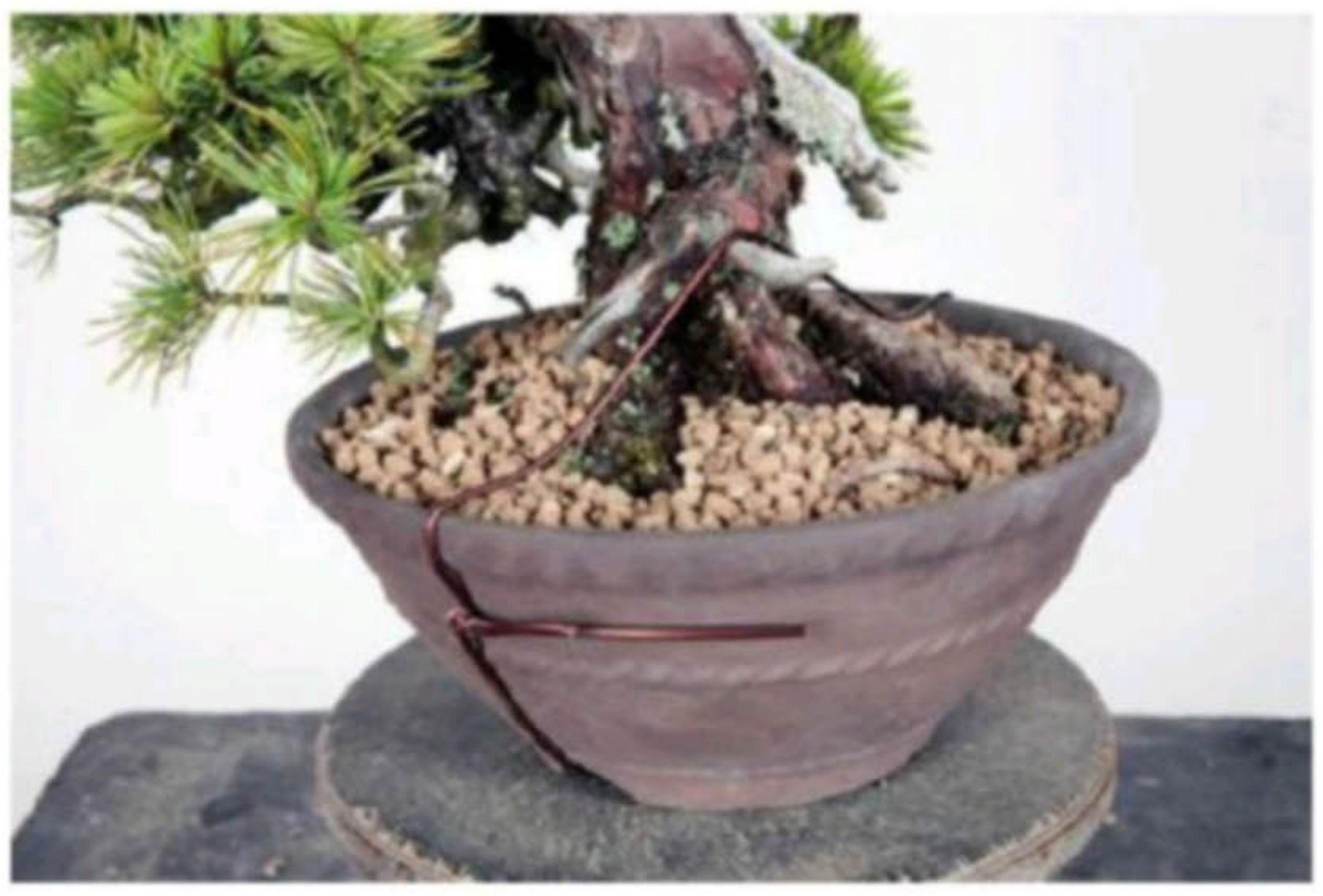


The weeds and moss that covered the surface have been removed and the surface soil has been scraped off. This will improve water drainage

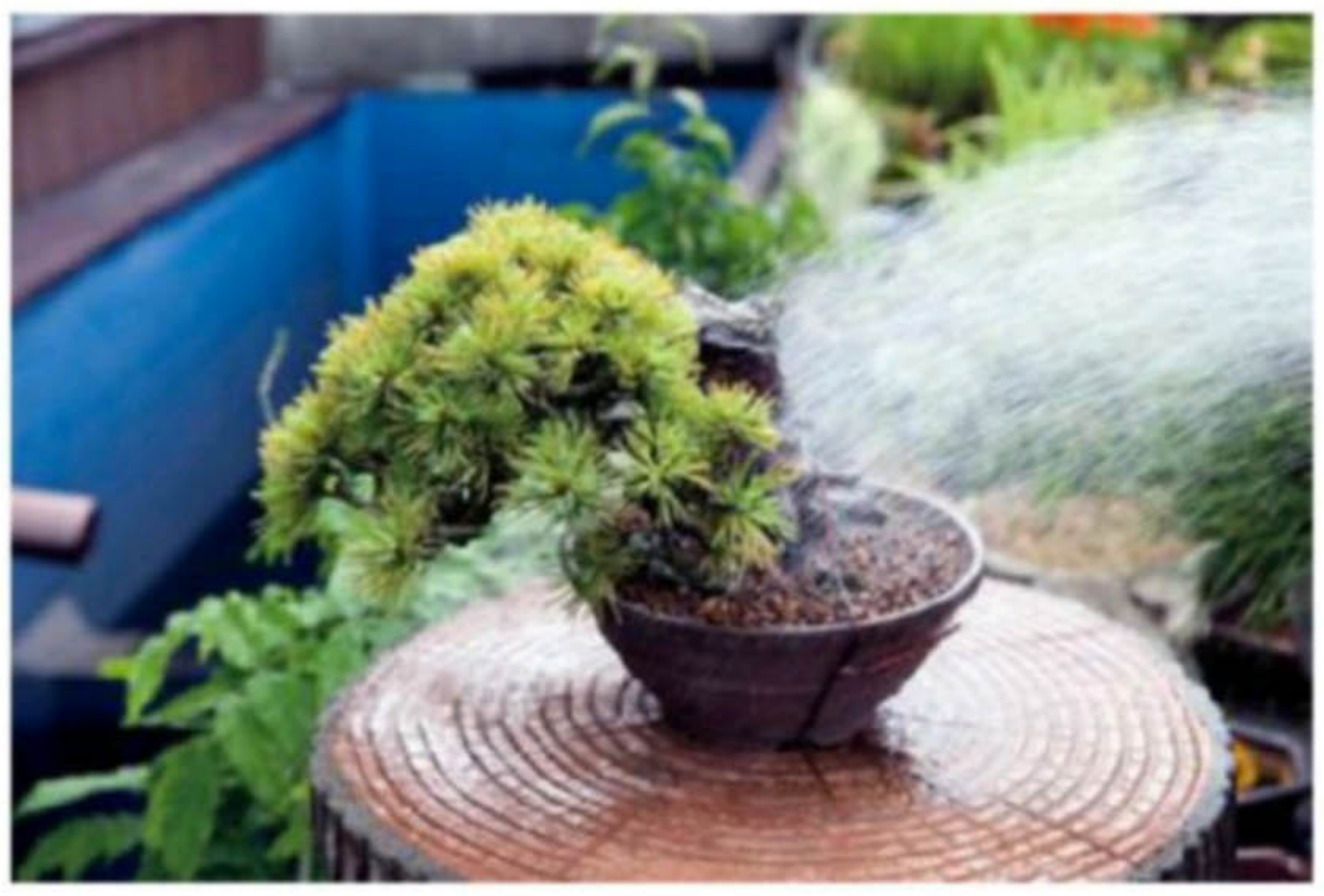
The pot on the right is the old one; the one on the left is the new pot that is going to be used. The plant will be placed in this slightly larger pot to improve the cultivation environment



Since this is not the ideal repotting period, the root ball is not disturbed. Instead, the plant is placed into the new pot, and fresh soil is poured around the outside of the root ball

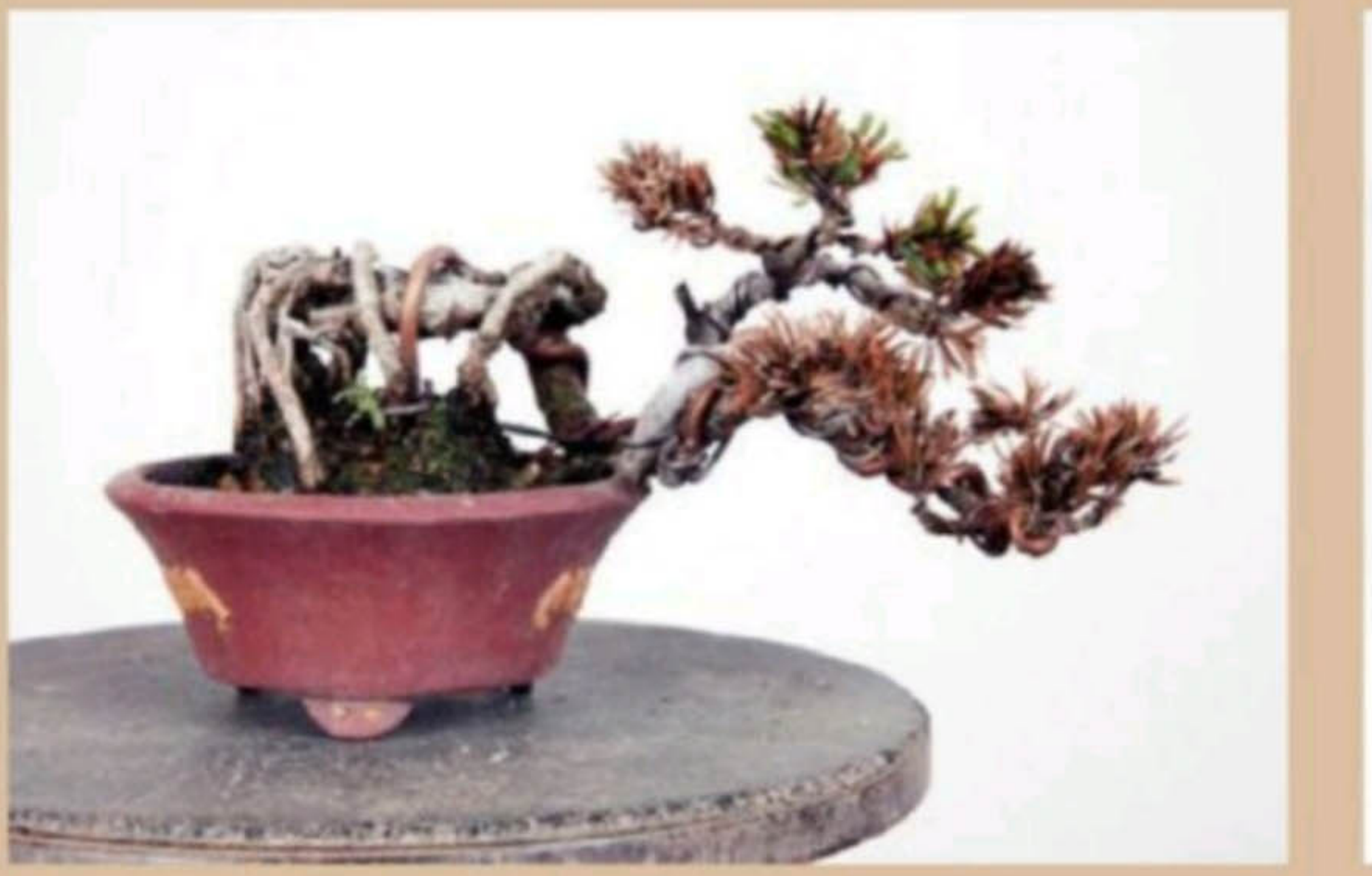


The repotting is complete. Water will now penetrate through the new soil on the outside, providing more room for the roots to grow. Ensure the tree is secure so it doesn't move around in the new pot

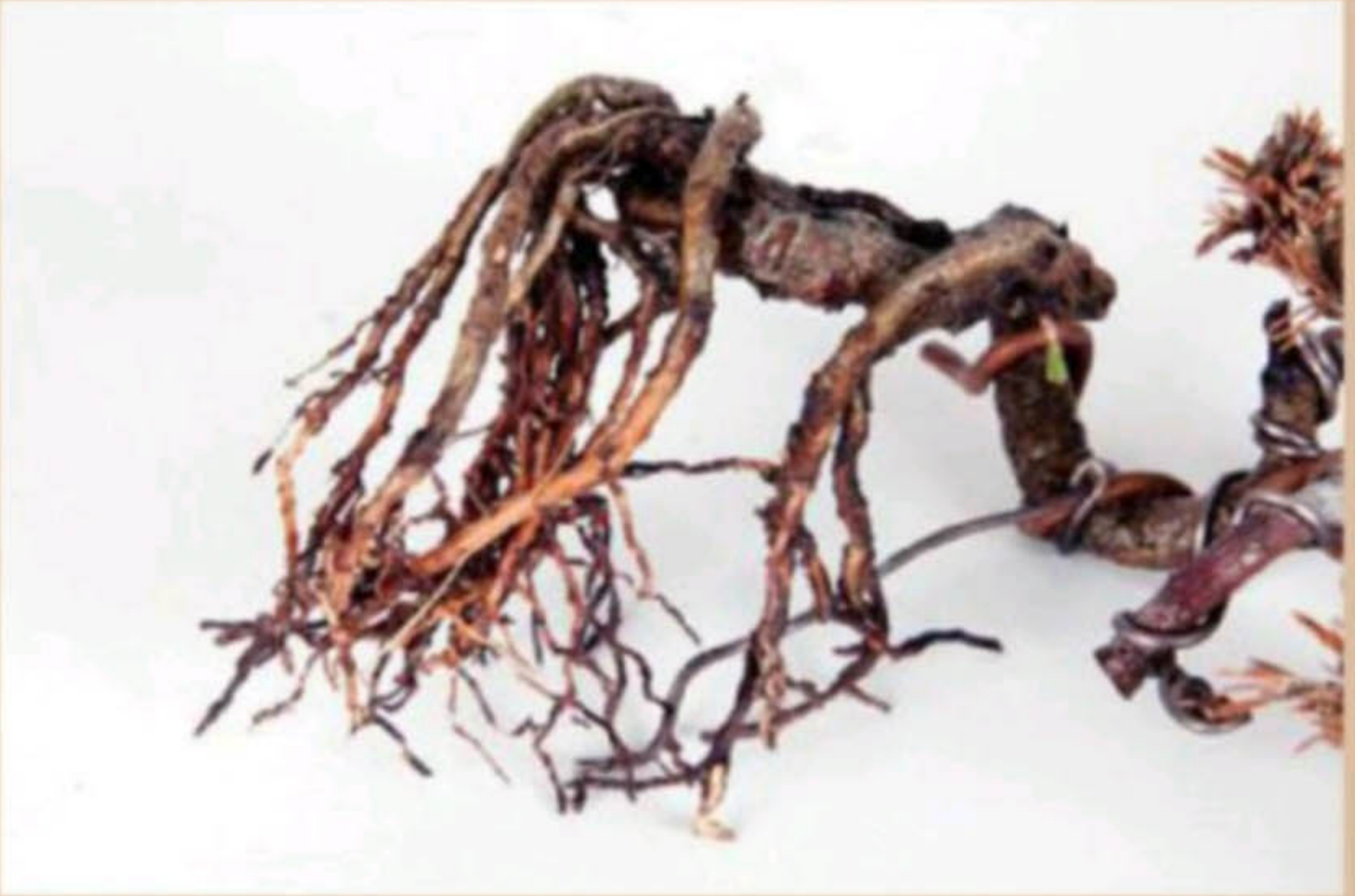


After the repotting, water the tree thoroughly, just as you would with a normal repotting. Keep it in a semi-shaded area for 1-2 weeks to help it recover and acclimatise

Root rot is progressing, and recovery is difficult



Most of the leaves in this five-needle pine have turned brown and are withered, with only a few green leaves remaining near the crown of the tree. The branches without green leaves are believed to have already died

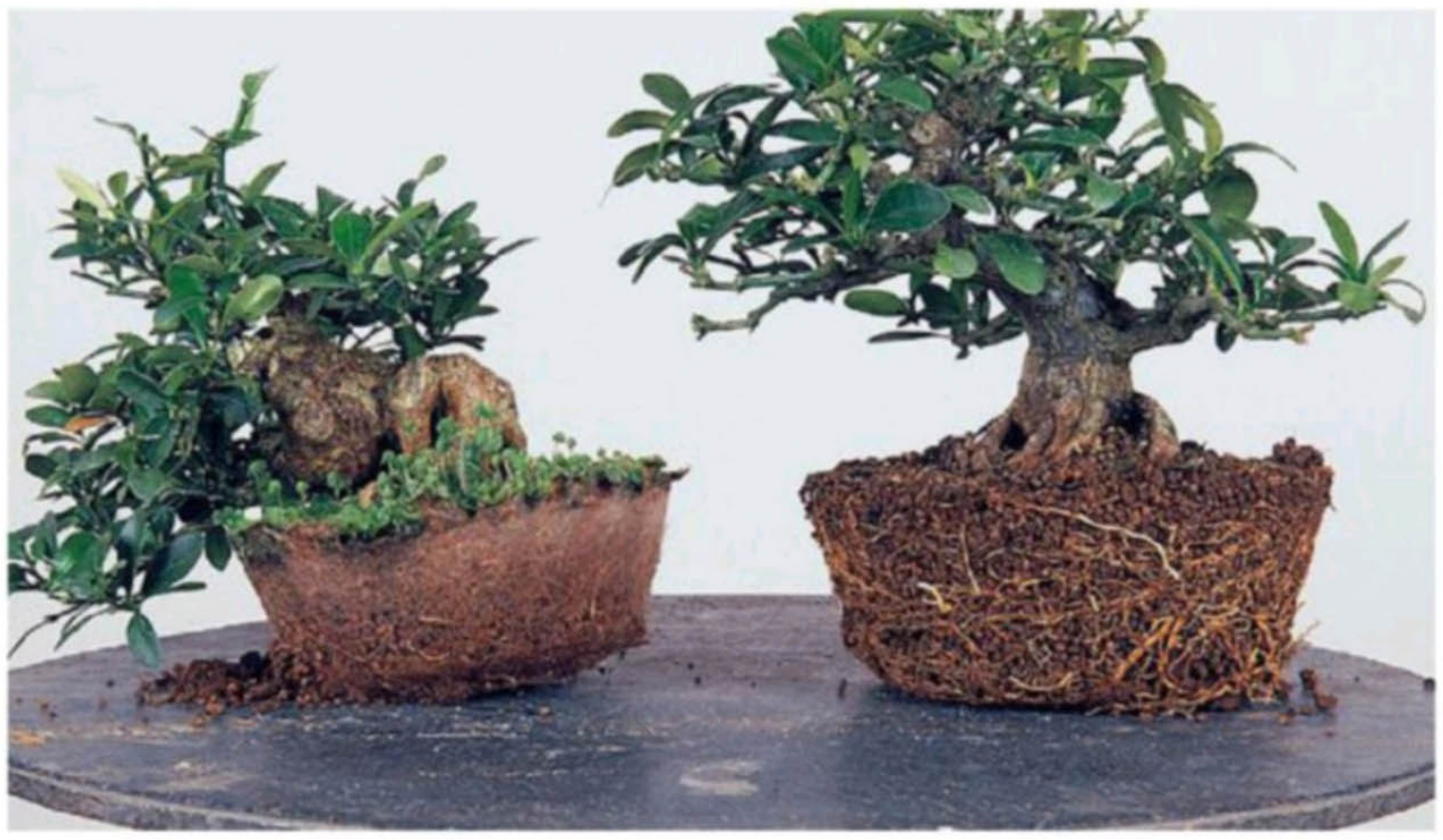


Above: When the tree was removed from the pot, the soil easily crumbled, exposing the roots. Most of the fine roots were almost completely lost.
Above right: The fact that the bark can be easily peeled off is evidence that the roots have already rotted

A 'Kinzu' or dwarf kumquat (*Fortunella hindsii*) with root rot

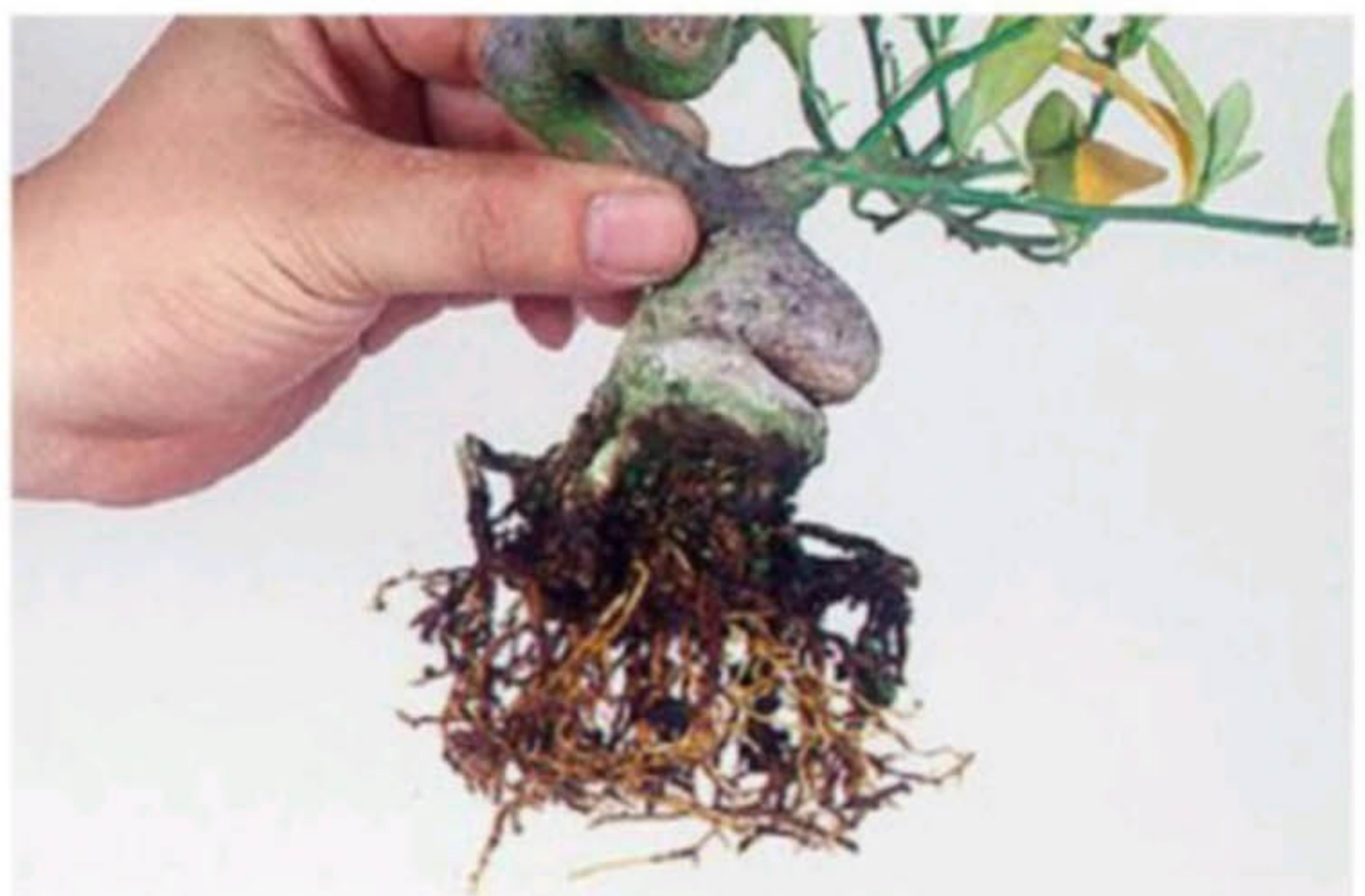
Revitalization by repotting

Kinzu is a tree species that likes lots of water. If it experiences drought even once, it may trigger root rot. Of course, if the roots suffer some damage, but are planted in well-draining soil, severe issues can be avoided. However, if poor-draining soil is used, water uptake from roots decreases, leading to excessive moisture and, in some cases, making the root rot worse.
This tree exhibited symptoms such as yellowing leaves, leading to the decision that its situation needed urgent improvement. As a result, it was replanted in the summer.



A comparison between a tree affected by root rot (left) and a healthy tree (right). In the healthy tree, fine roots can be seen extending around the outer perimeter of the root ball, whereas in the tree affected by root rot, very few fine roots are visible

A Kinzu showing symptoms of drought damage. The leaf colour has faded, and several leaves have turned yellow. If left untreated, there is a risk of the tree dying

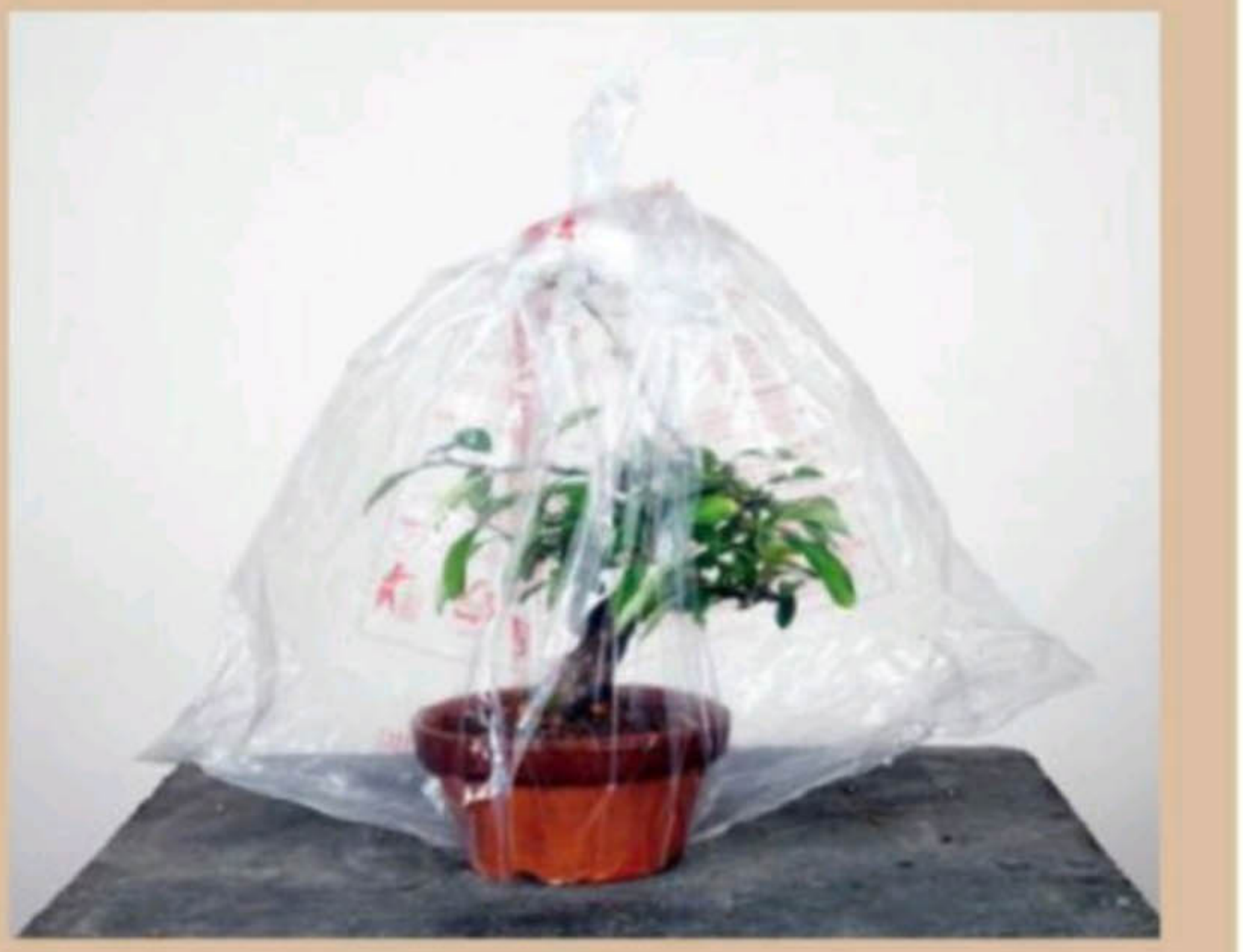


Above: Upon removing the tree from the pot, fine roots were observed to have grown enough to hold the root ball together. However, the next photo shows that once the soil was loosened, the actual root mass was found to be much smaller than expected. If the repotting had been delayed further, even more roots would have been lost

After repotting, the tree was placed in well-draining soil without cutting the roots. For the after care, it is kept under shade cloth, or on a lower shelf, with careful watering, neither too much, nor too little

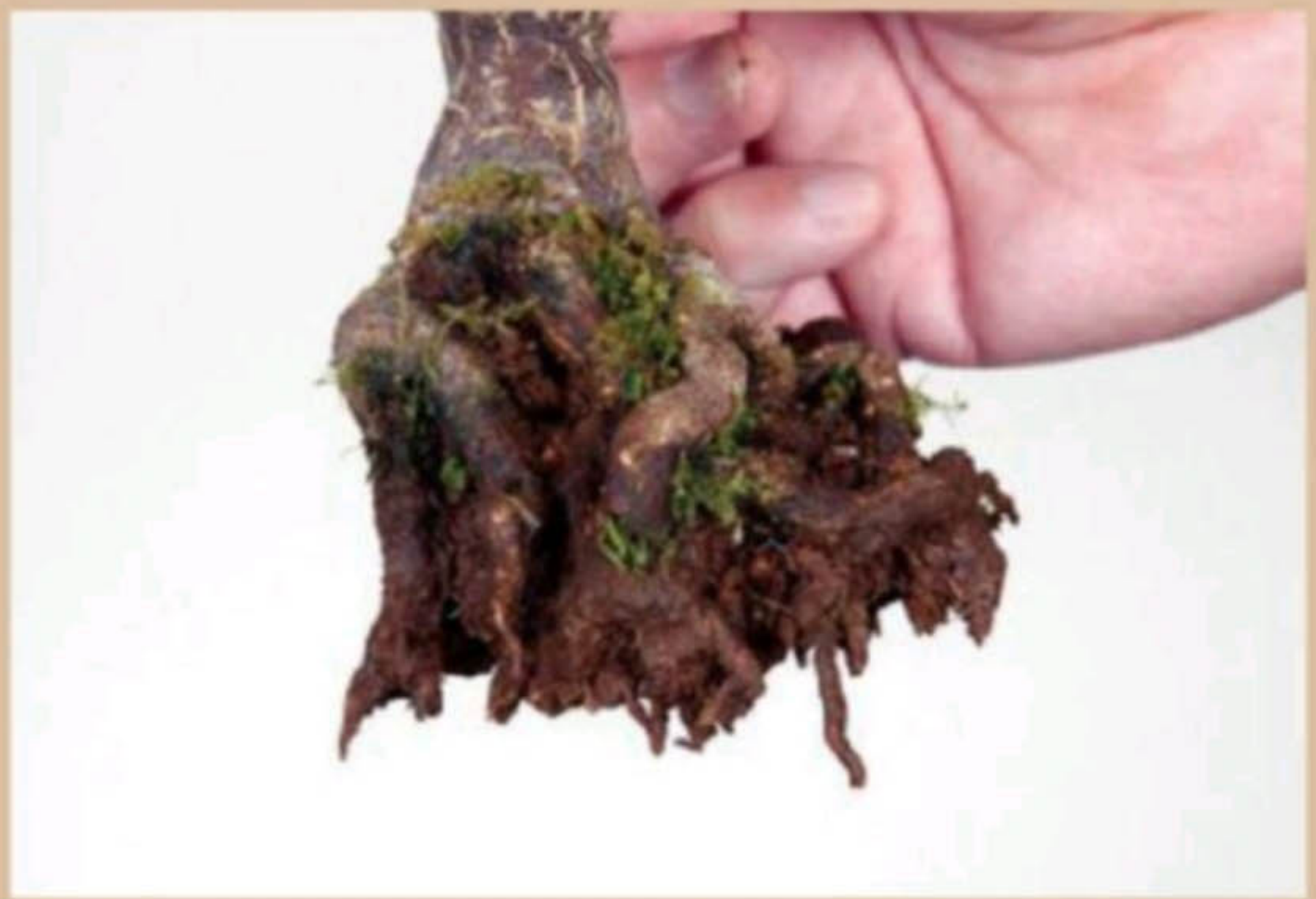
Creating a protective mist environment with a plastic bag

If root condition is severe, a method to promote tree recovery after replanting is to cover it with a plastic bag and keep it in partial shade. This increases surrounding humidity, reducing water loss through transpiration and preventing dehydration. As moisture circulates within the bag, watering is only needed about once every 4–5 days. Once new shoots appear, the top of the bag can be slightly opened to allow in fresh air. If recovery progresses smoothly, the tree can be removed from the bag and returned to the shelf after about six months to a year.

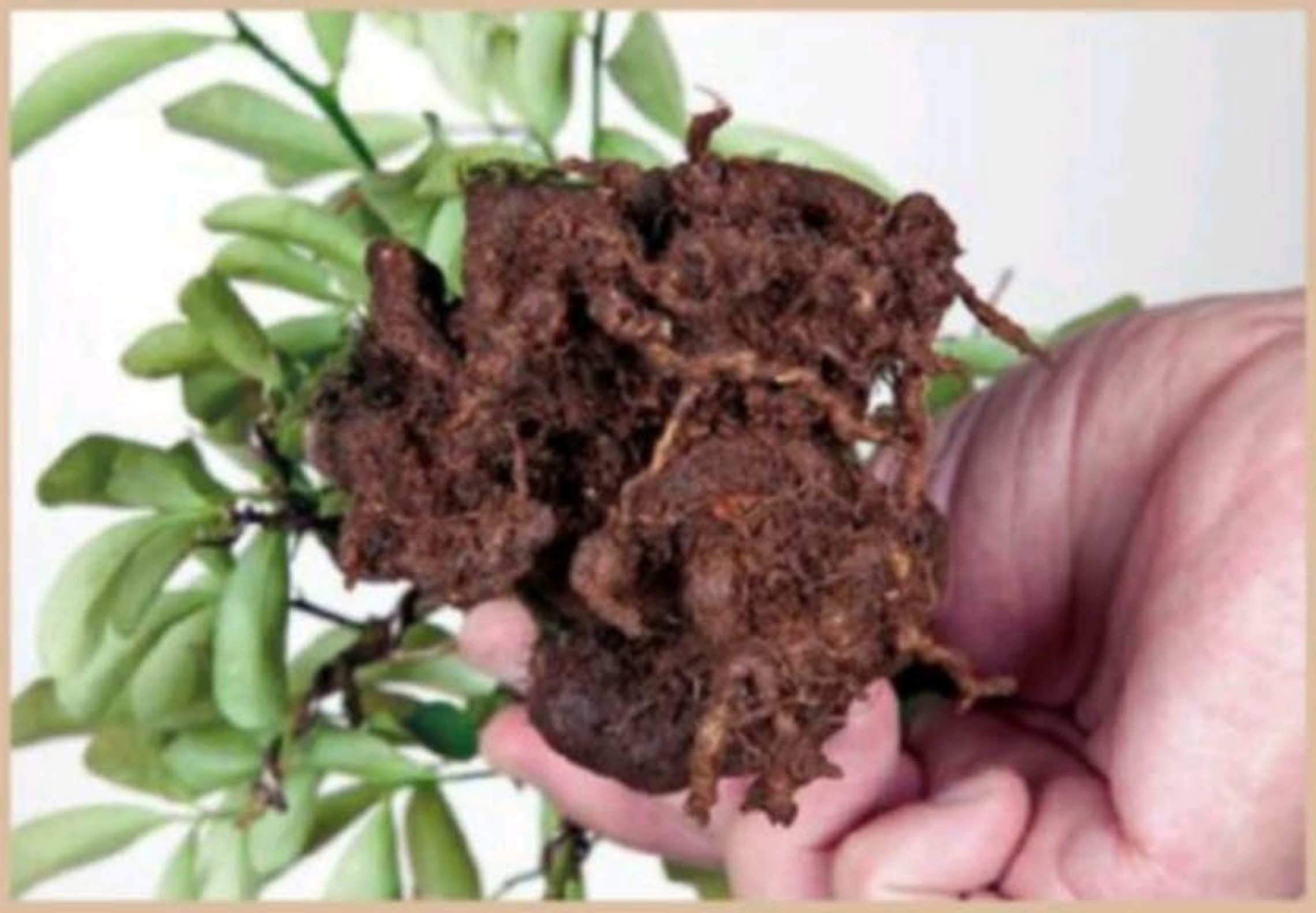


Since there are very few fine roots, the tree is thoroughly watered before it is covered with a plastic bag and placed on a lower shelf for protection. This increases surrounding humidity and reduces water loss through transpiration from the leaves

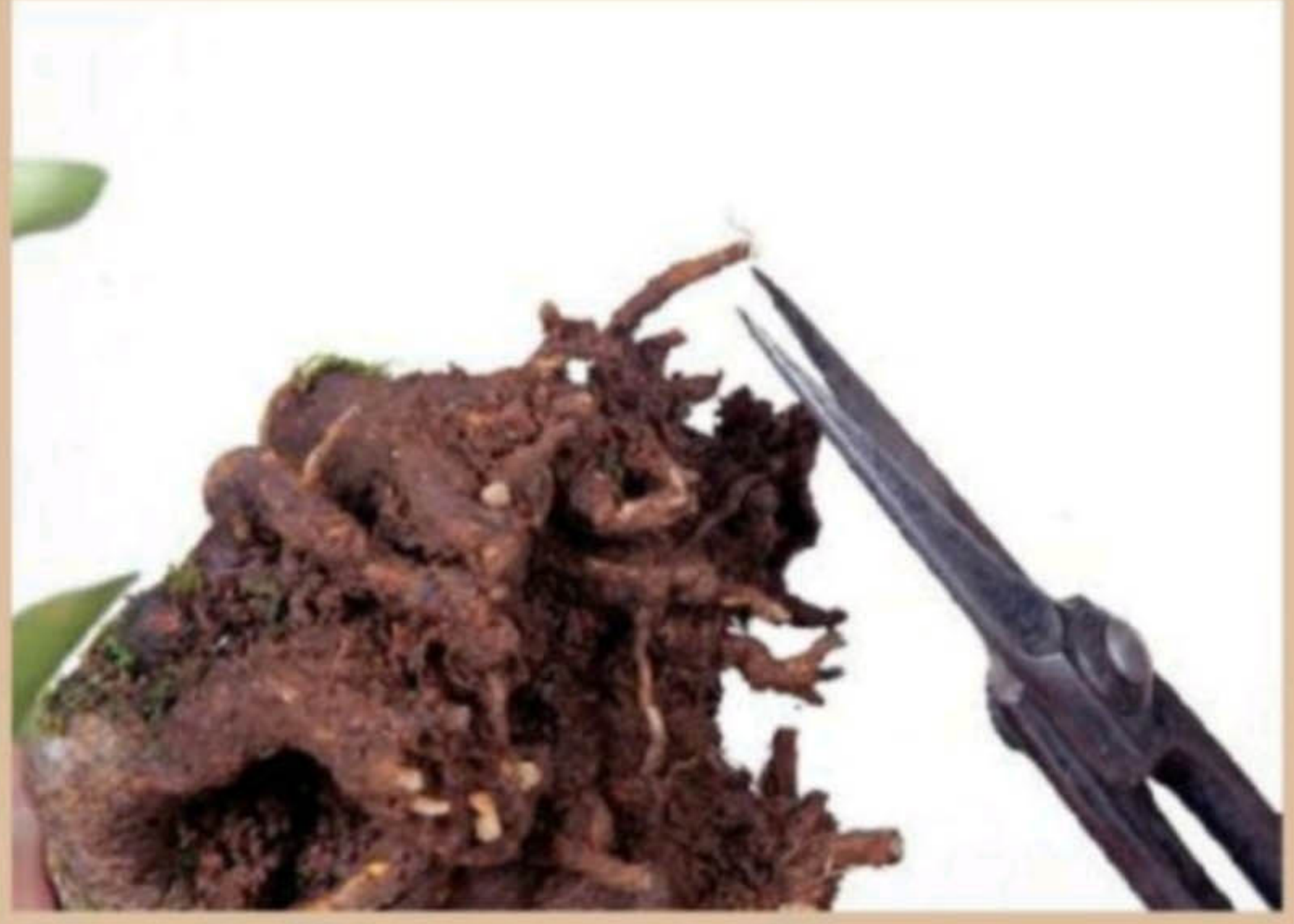
The difference in roots when using a simple humidity system



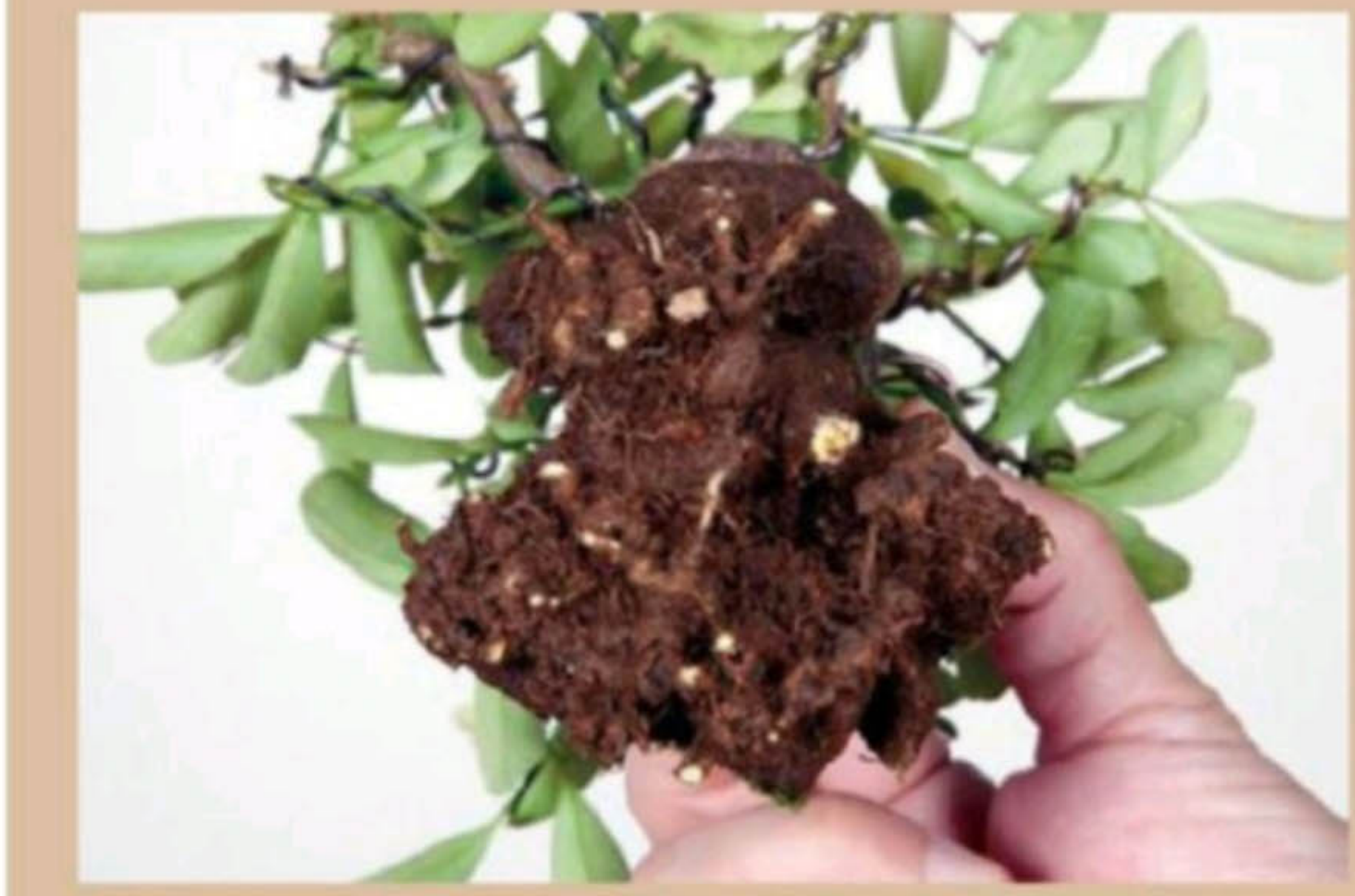
A Kinzu affected by root rot. This example is shown on a different tree



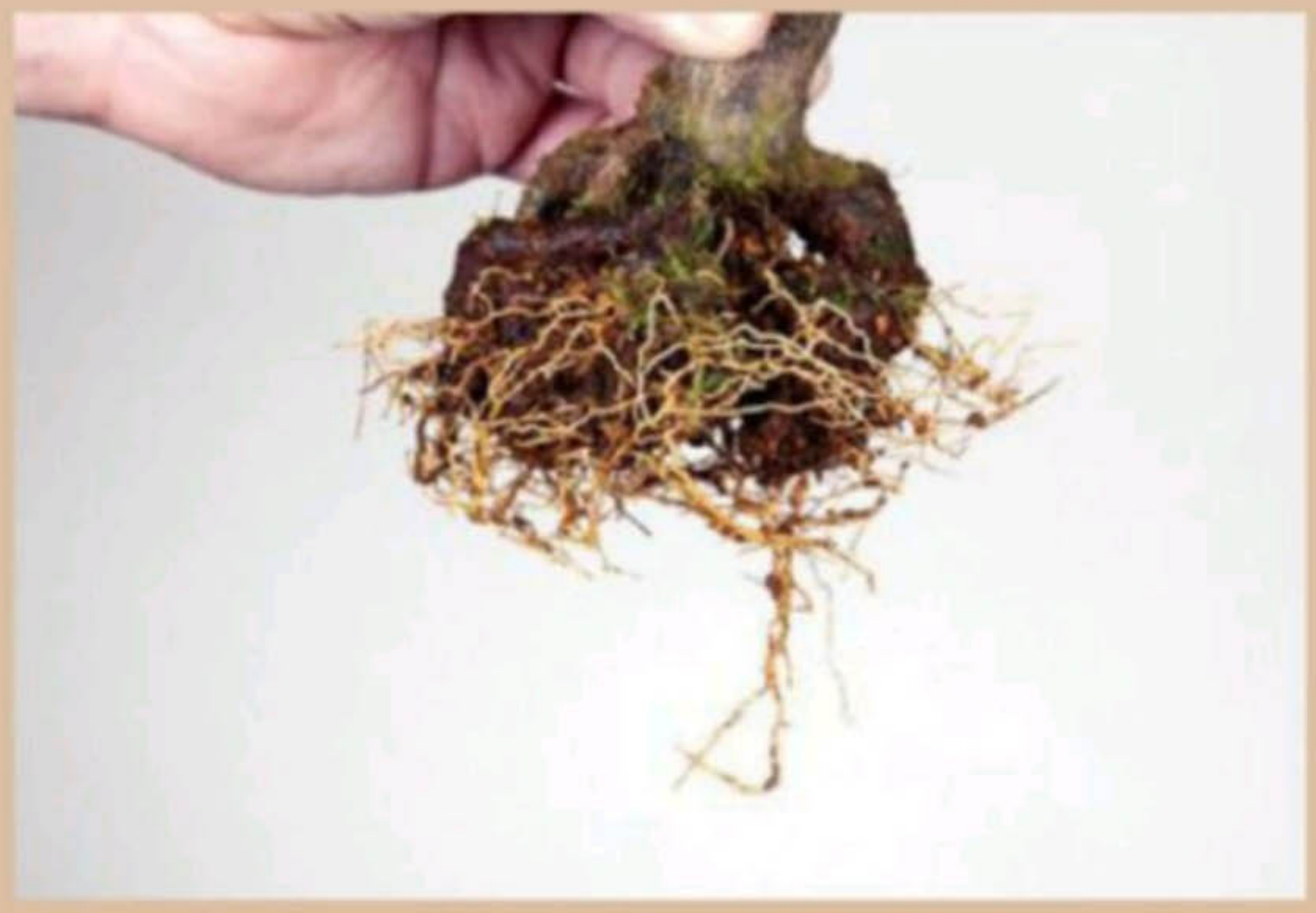
As seen from beneath. The root ball is broken down and there are hardly any fine roots



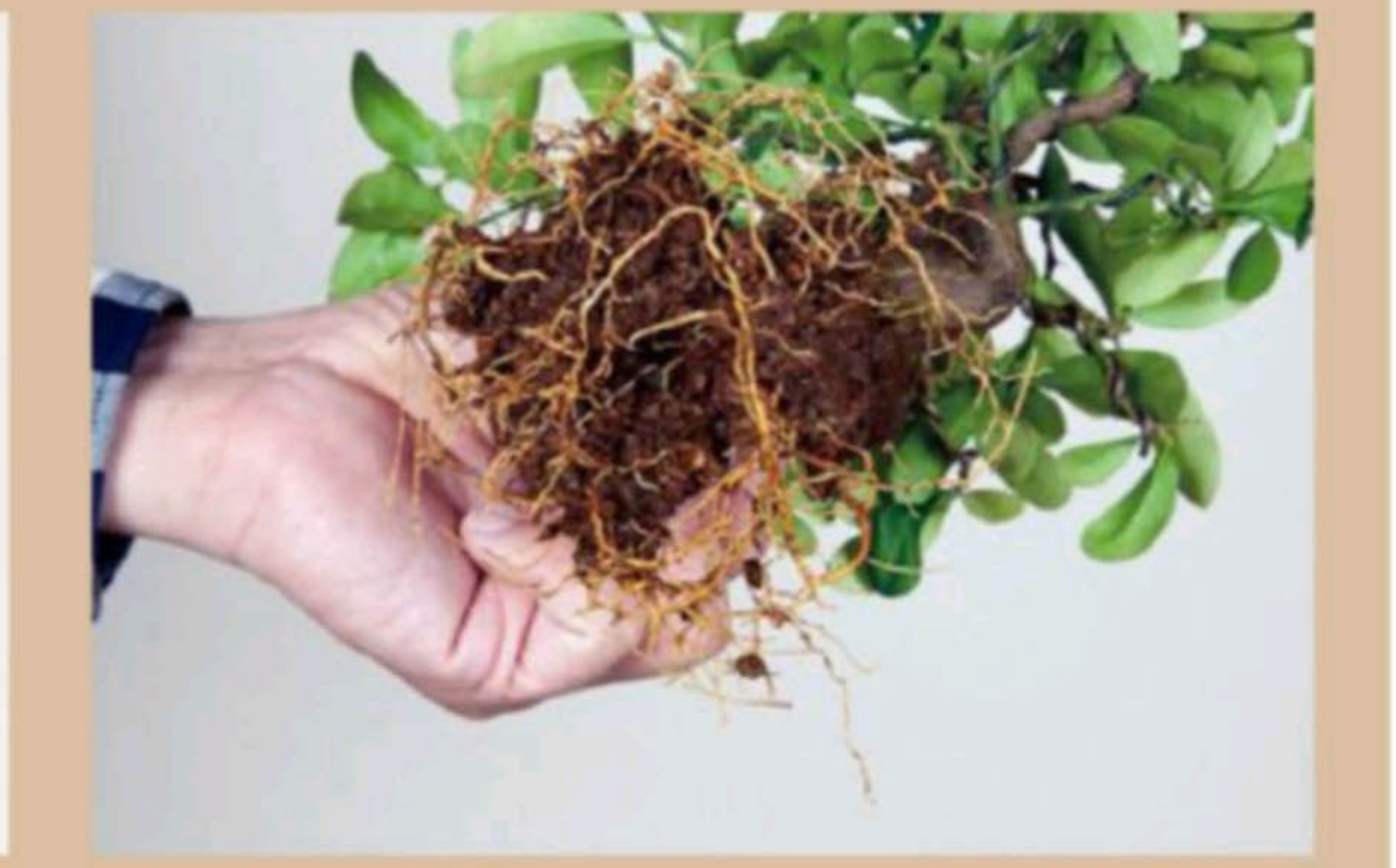
In order to see if the roots are alive, the tips of the roots are cut a tiny bit



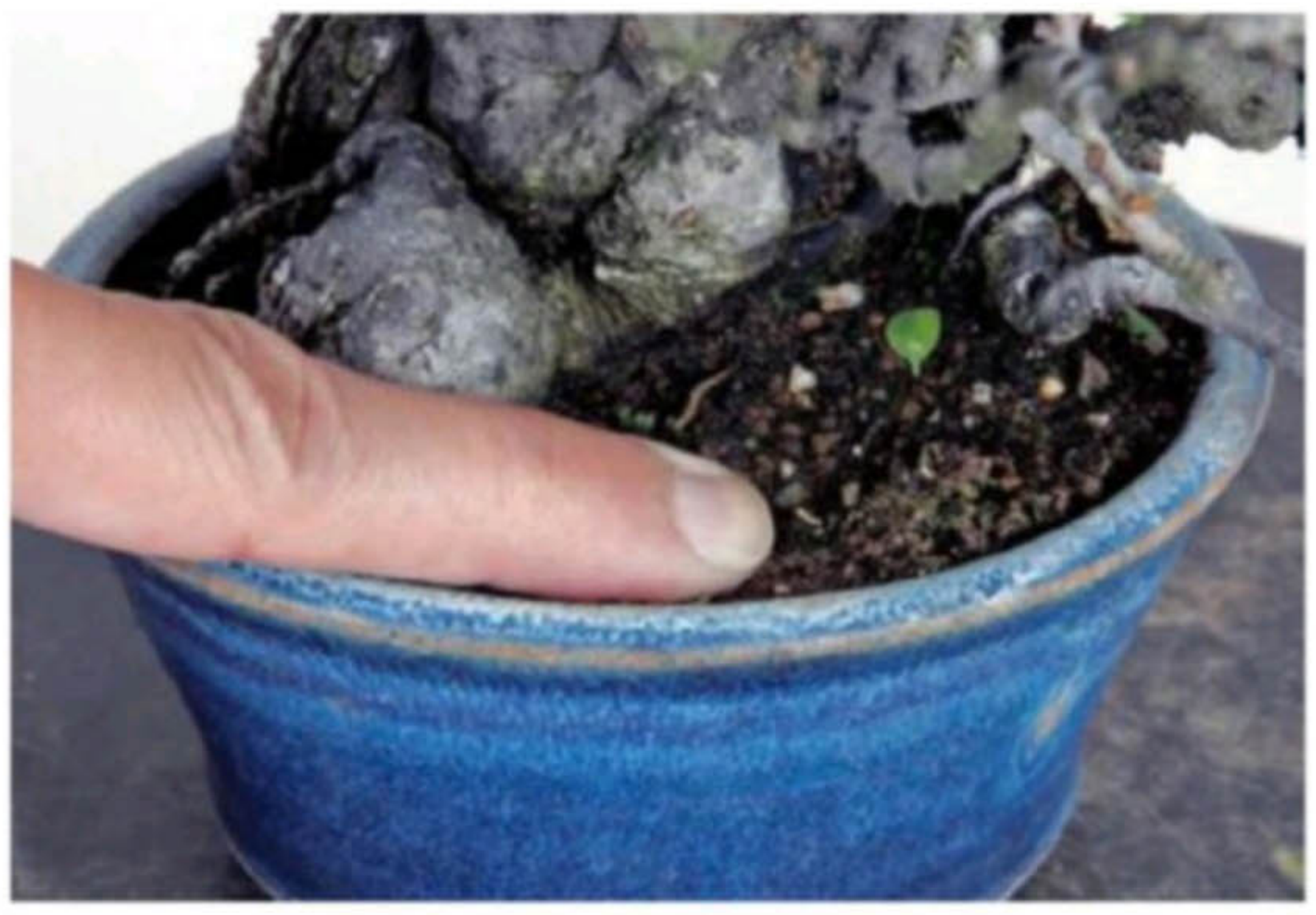
There are plenty of root tips cuts and they are all still alive



One year has passed growing in the simple mist environment. A lot of roots have developed



Looking beneath. Plenty of new roots are emerging and the recovery is proceeding well

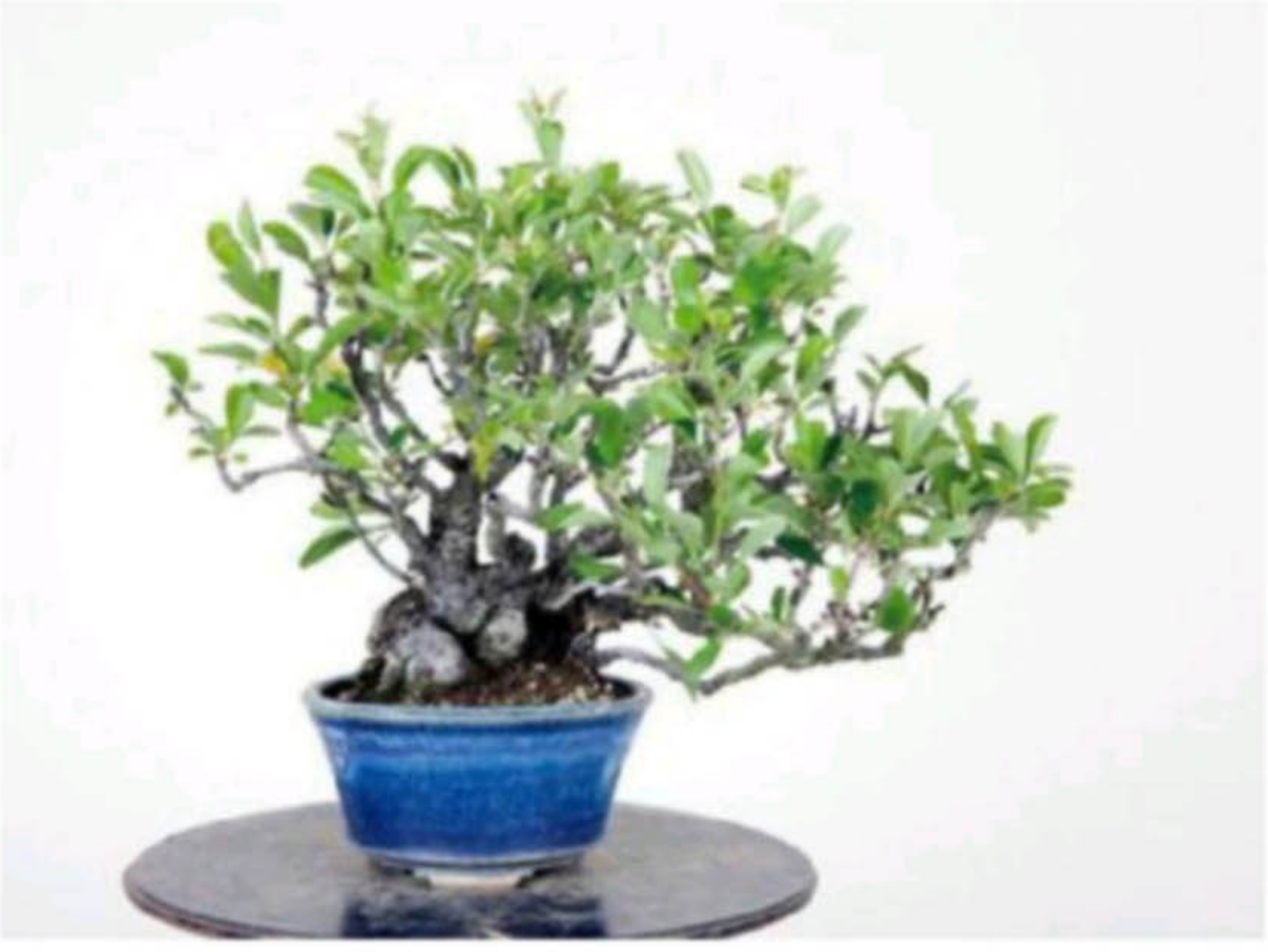


The condition of the top soil is checked before the work begins. It has not been repotted for a while and the topsoil has become hard and water penetration is difficult

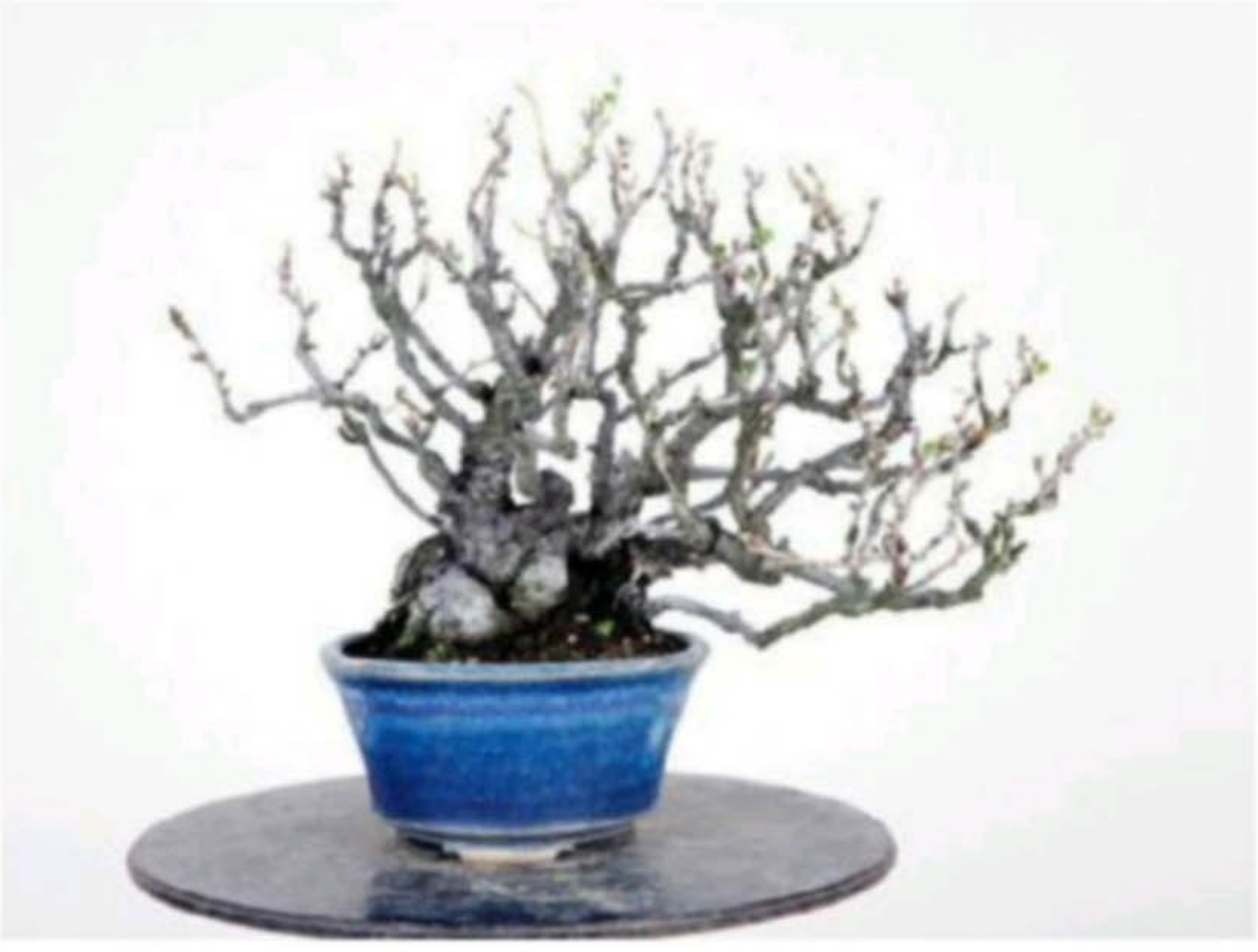
Repotting chojubai in the summer to prevent drought damage

Currently, this white chojubai (*Chaenomeles speciosa*) is not experiencing any vigour issues and is showing strong budding. However, several years have passed since the last replanting, causing surface soil to harden and drainage to deteriorate. Originally, replanting had been planned for spring, but the timing was missed, and summer is approaching (this report was conducted in late June).

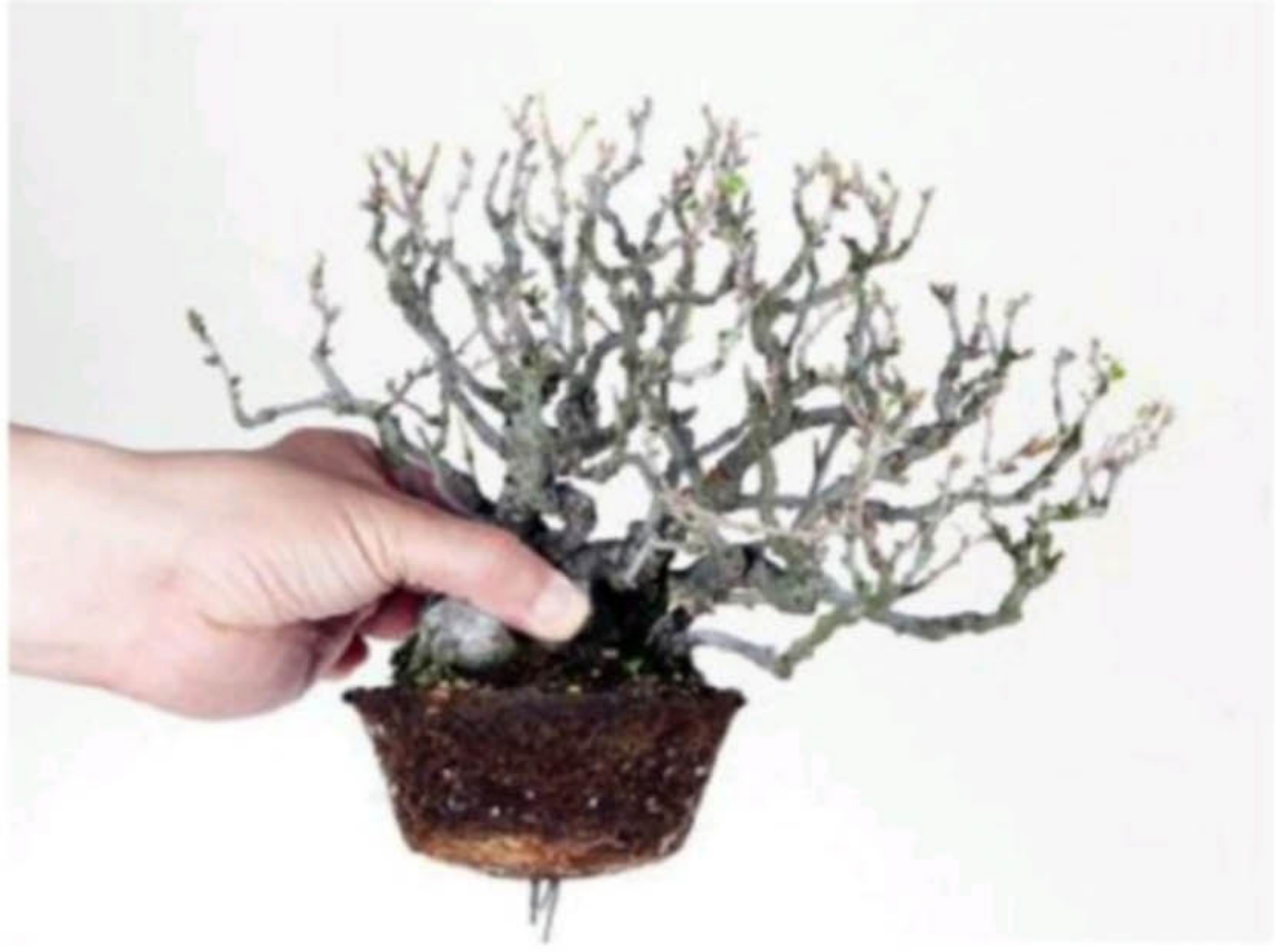
To prevent water shortages during the summer, the tree has been replanted. While autumn is generally considered the best time for replanting chojubai, some experts believe that it is June that is the ideal period. Here, we will introduce key points for successful summer replanting.



Japanese hawthorn, before work. Condition at the end of June

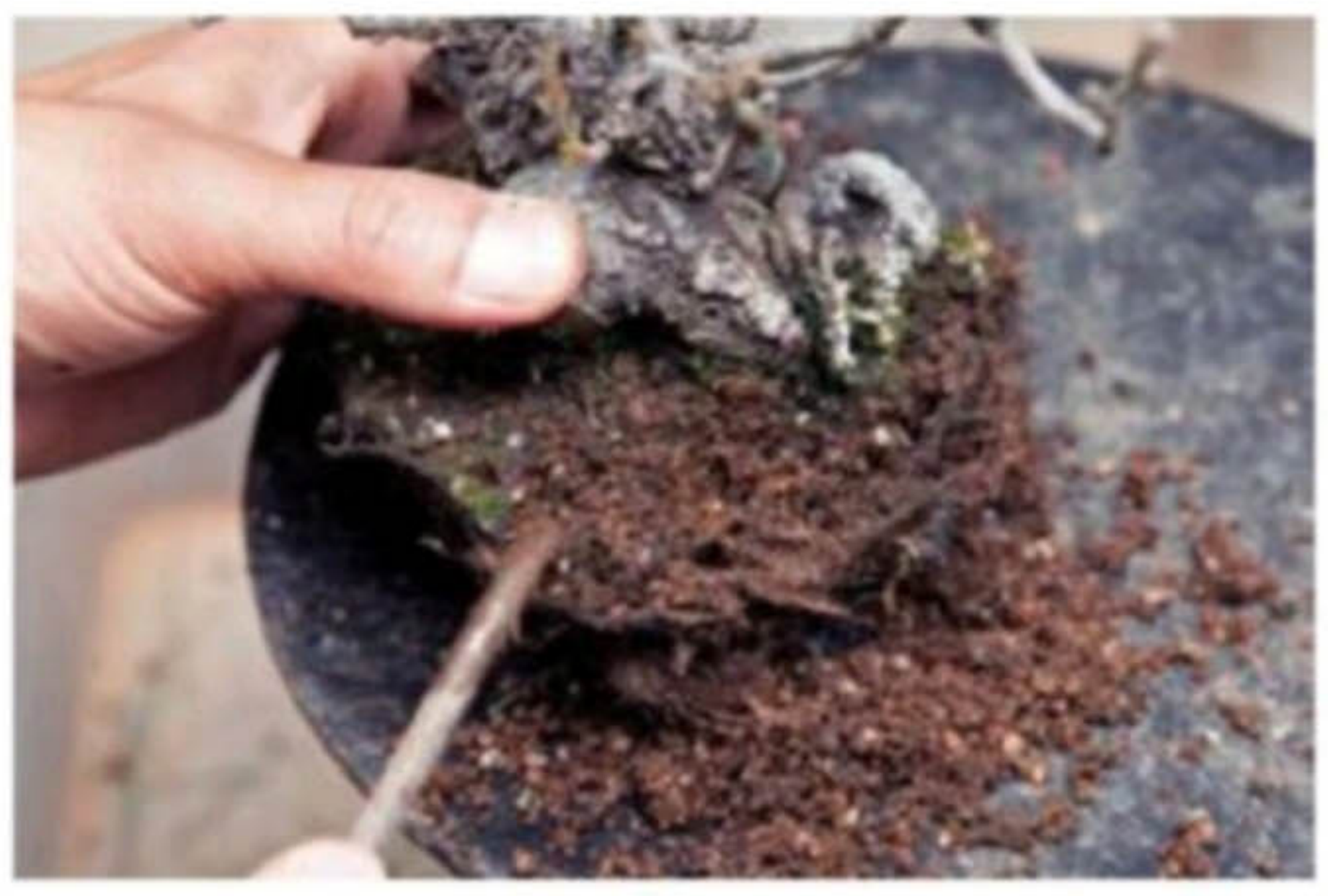


Before repotting, the tree is defoliated to reduce transpiration

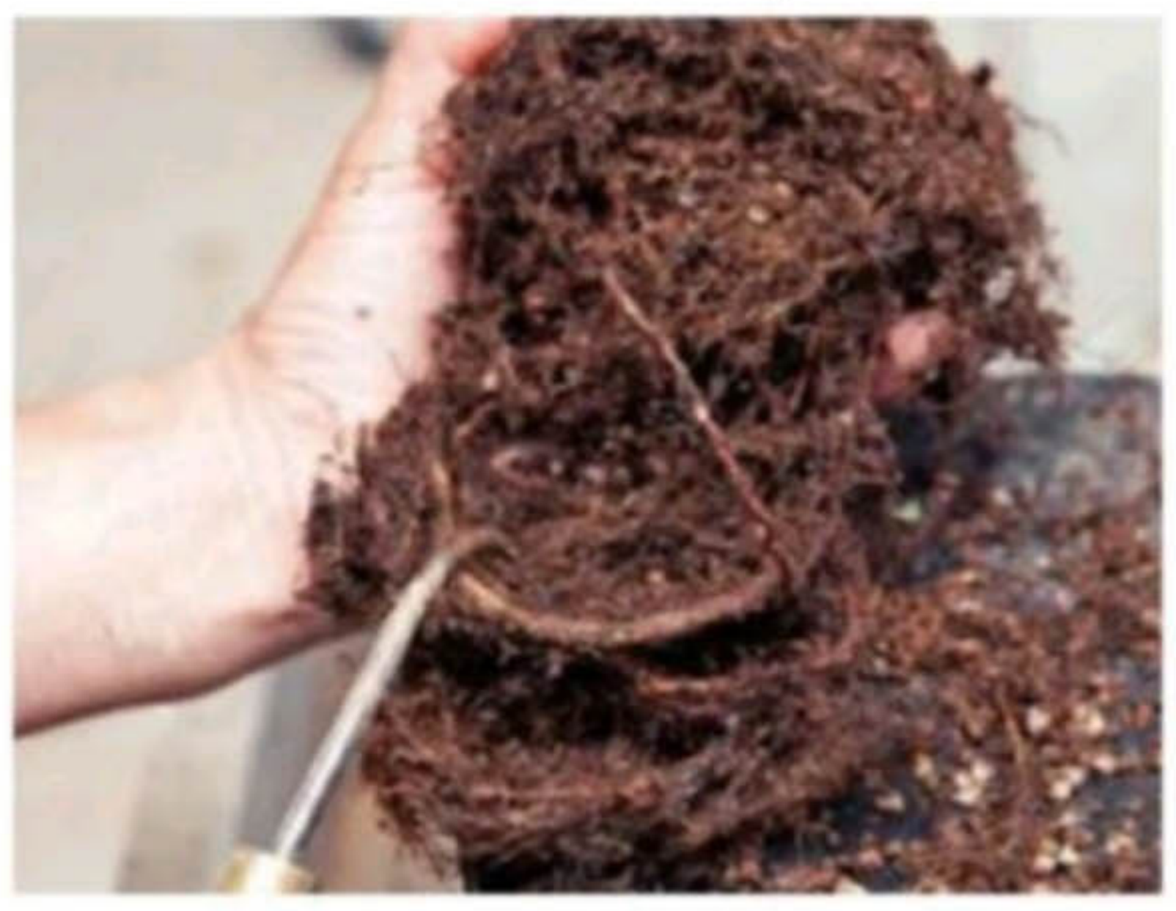


The condition of the roots is checked. Small roots are filling the pot

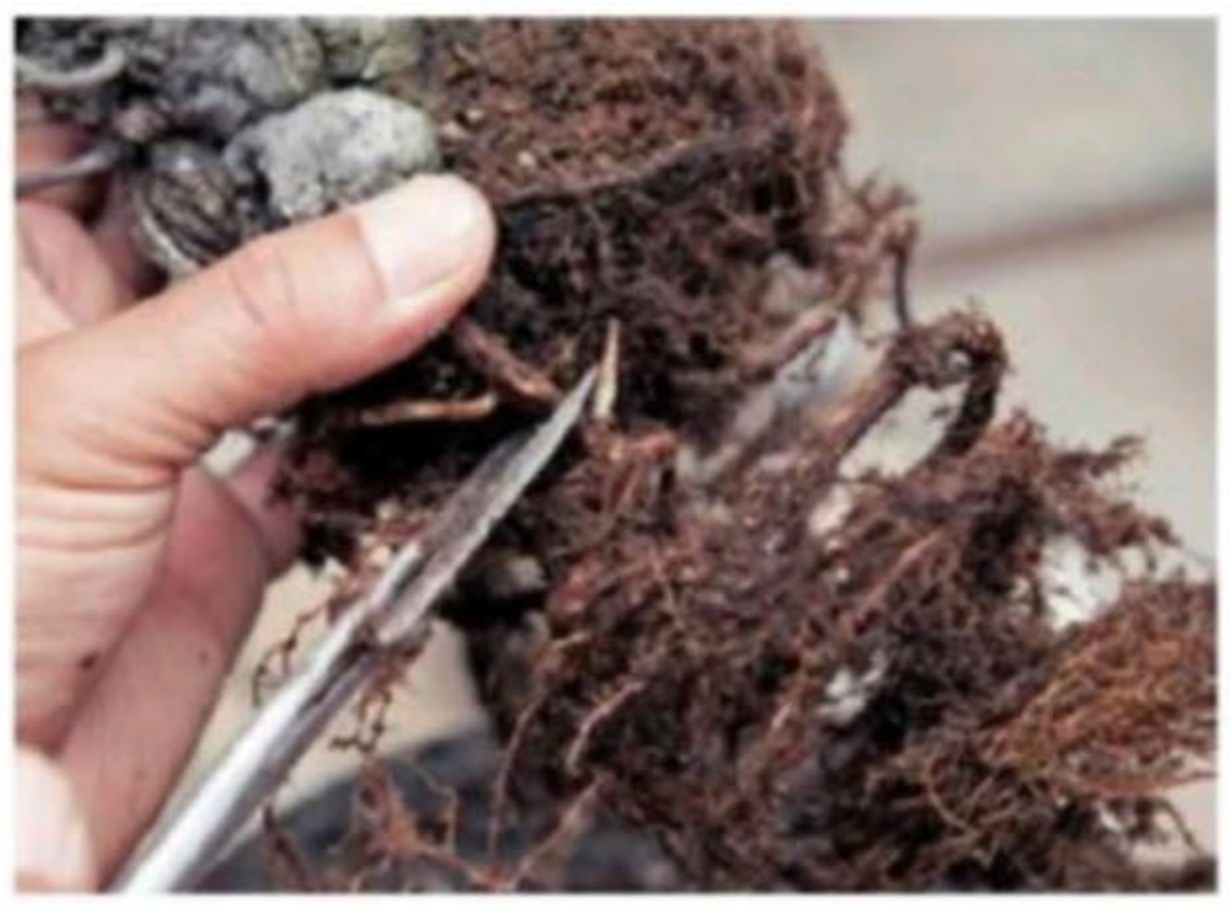
In order to reduce the burden on the tree, lots of fine roots are left



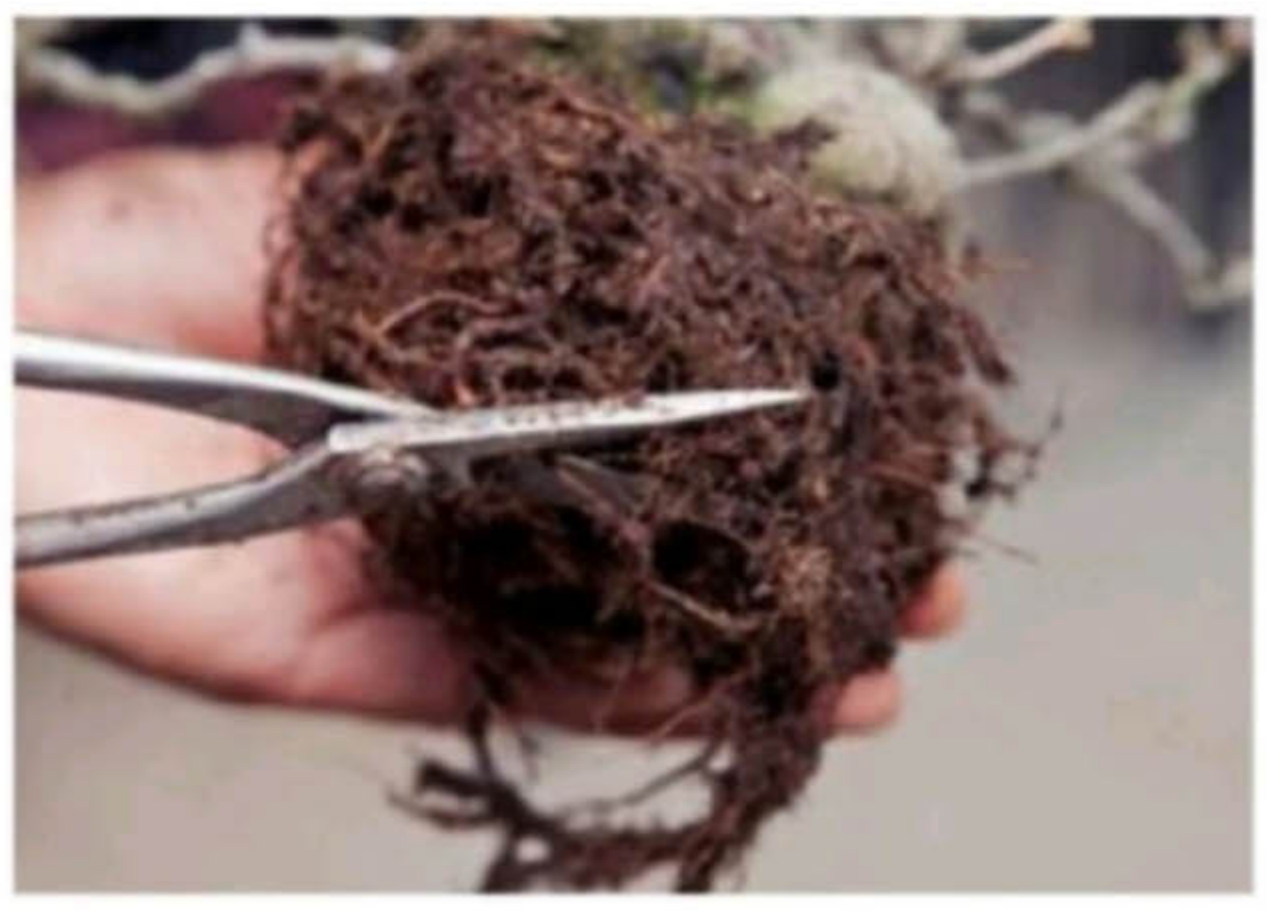
As with a normal repot the root ball is broken down from the top



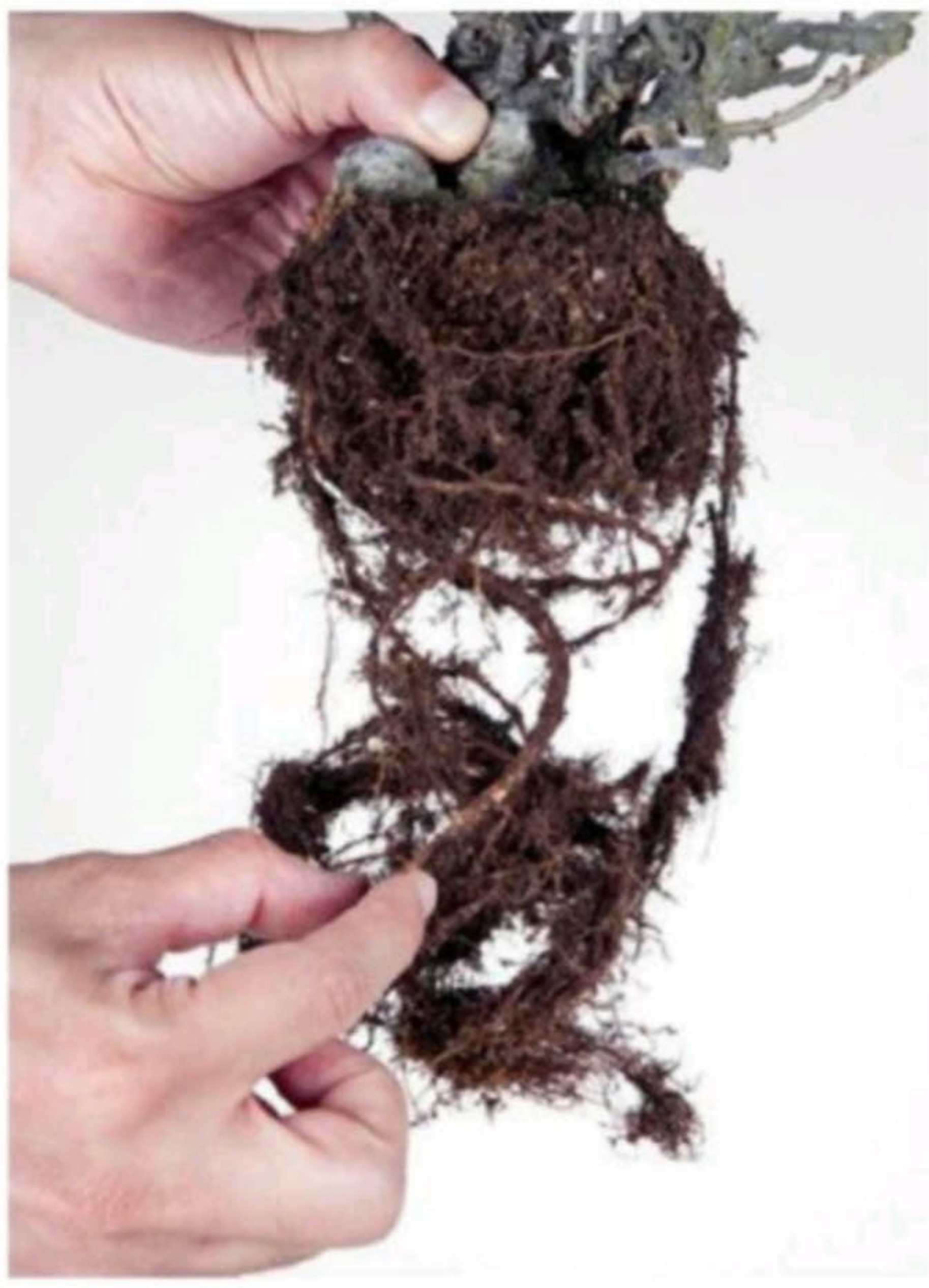
As the root ball is broken down, the presence of large roots can be confirmed



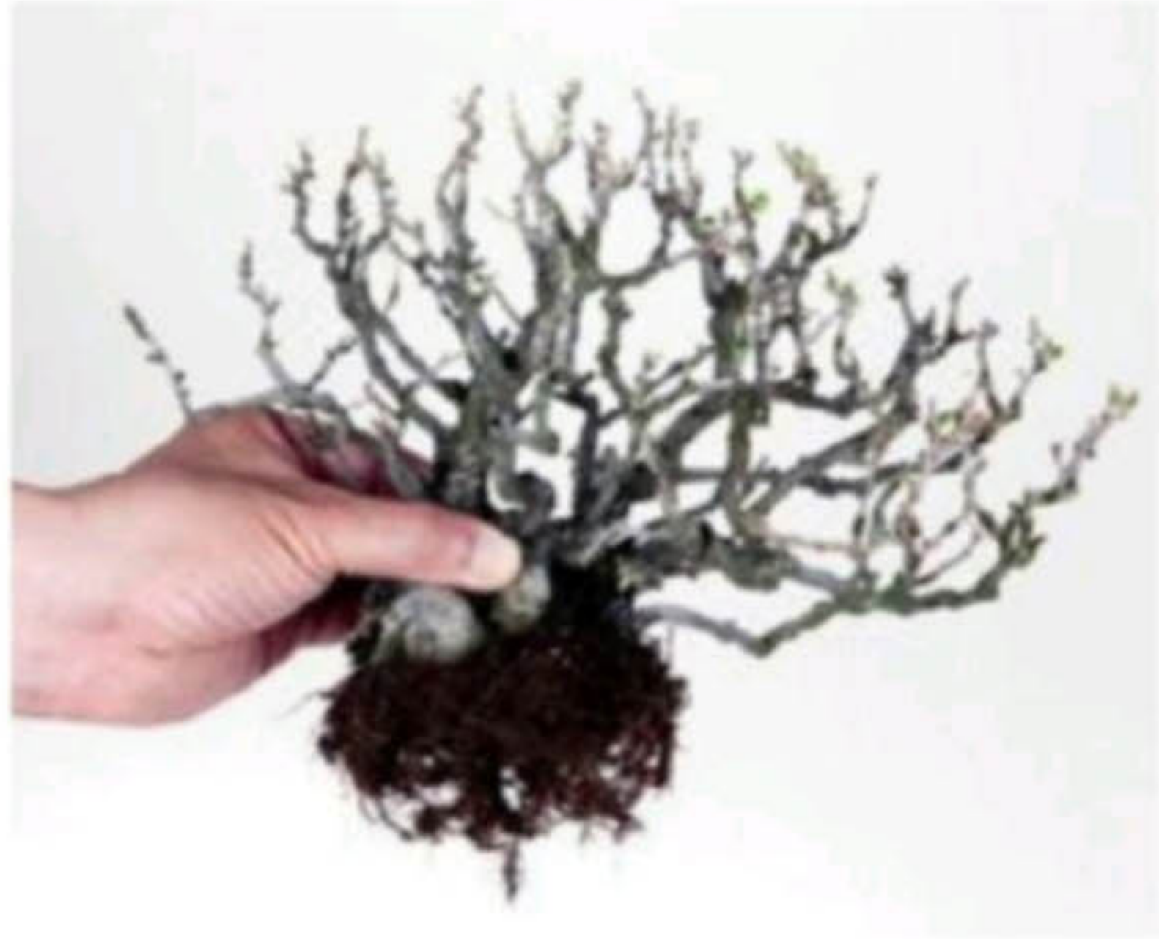
The thick roots are cut back to a point where small roots divide



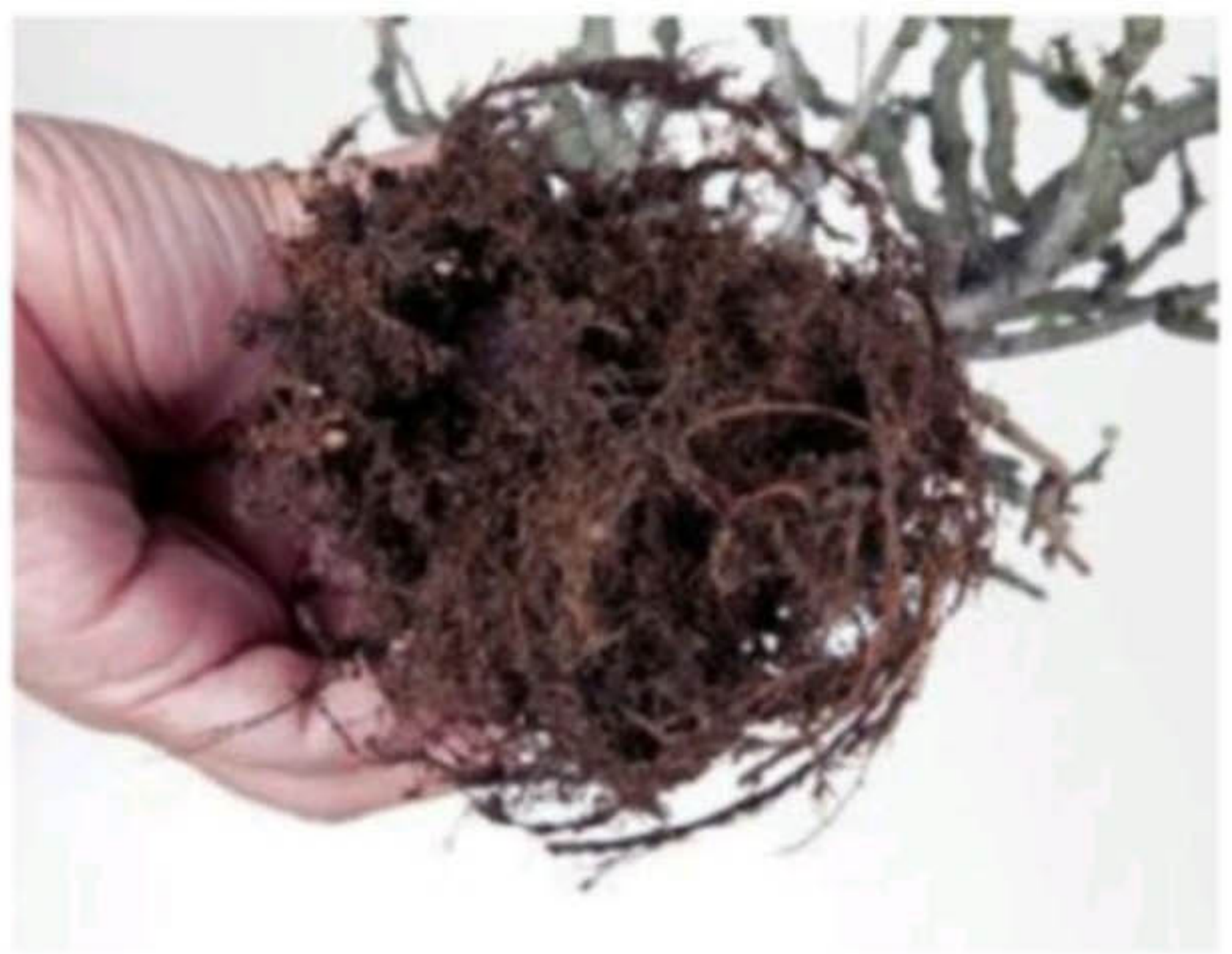
More strong roots have been found and pruned



In a spring or autumn repotting, strong, elongated roots circle the pot and typically are removed entirely. Considering the stress on the tree, they are cut at a fine root division. It's important to note that leaving these strong roots can hinder the growth of the finer roots, so when the tree is repotted next time the roots will be trimmed further back

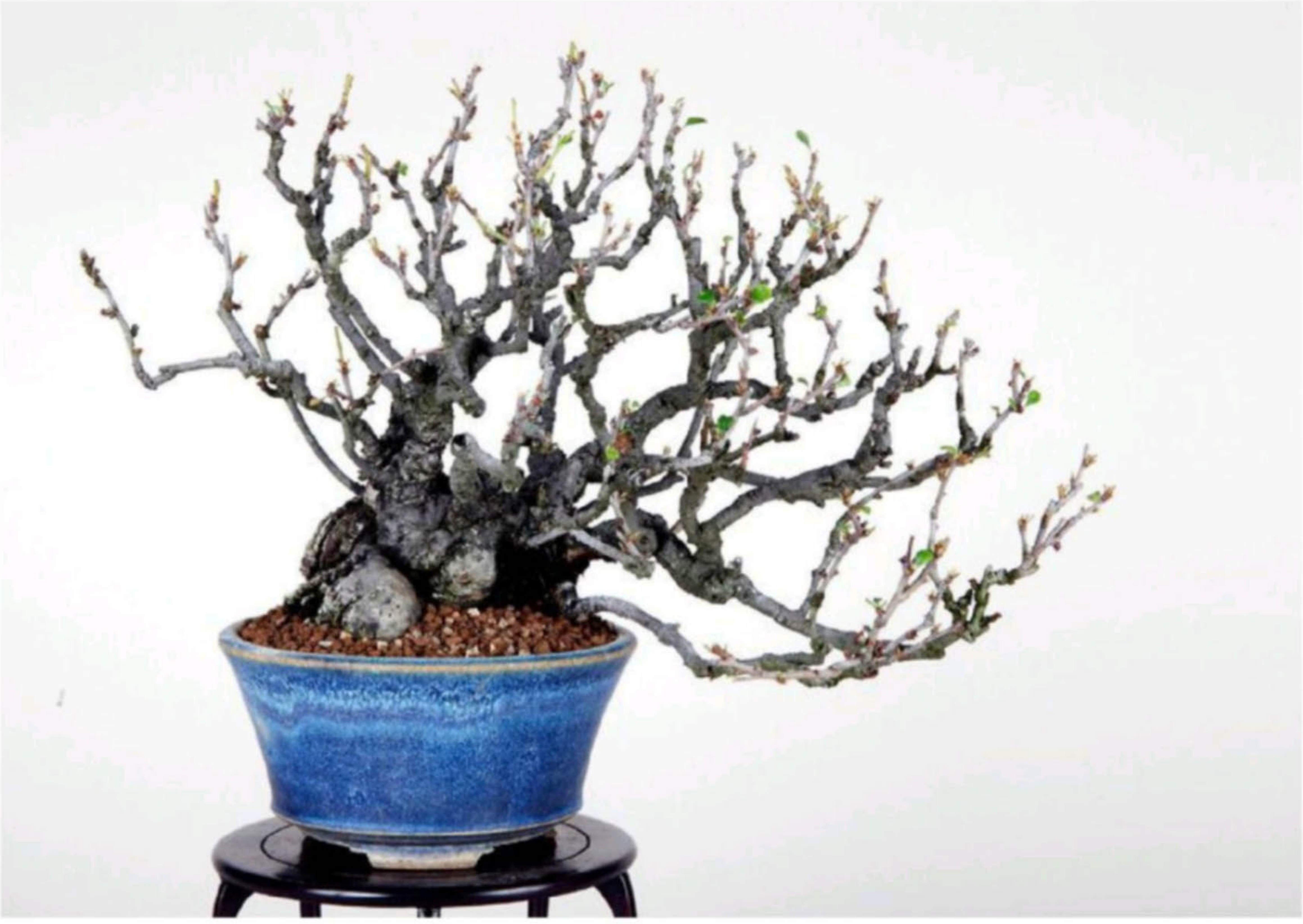


After the root work. The roots are left longer in order to reduce stress on the tree



After dealing with the roots, as seen from below

After repotting,. The new soil allows water to pass freely through the pot making ideal growing conditions



One thing led to another

The bonsai pottery passion of Jakub Malcharek

Text: Bonsai Focus Studio Photography: Jakub Malcharek

Jakub Malcharek likes to work on both bonsai and ceramic pottery. They seem to complement one another. One can't exist without the other and, thanks to his experience with bonsai, he knows what is required when making pots

CV

Jakub Malcharek (33)

Born in: Rožnov pod Radhoštem, Czech Republic

Education: IT developer

Profession: Japanese gardens, Niwaki (Japanese garden trees), Bonsai, Ceramics

Active since: Bonsai 2009, ceramics 2018

How did it all start?

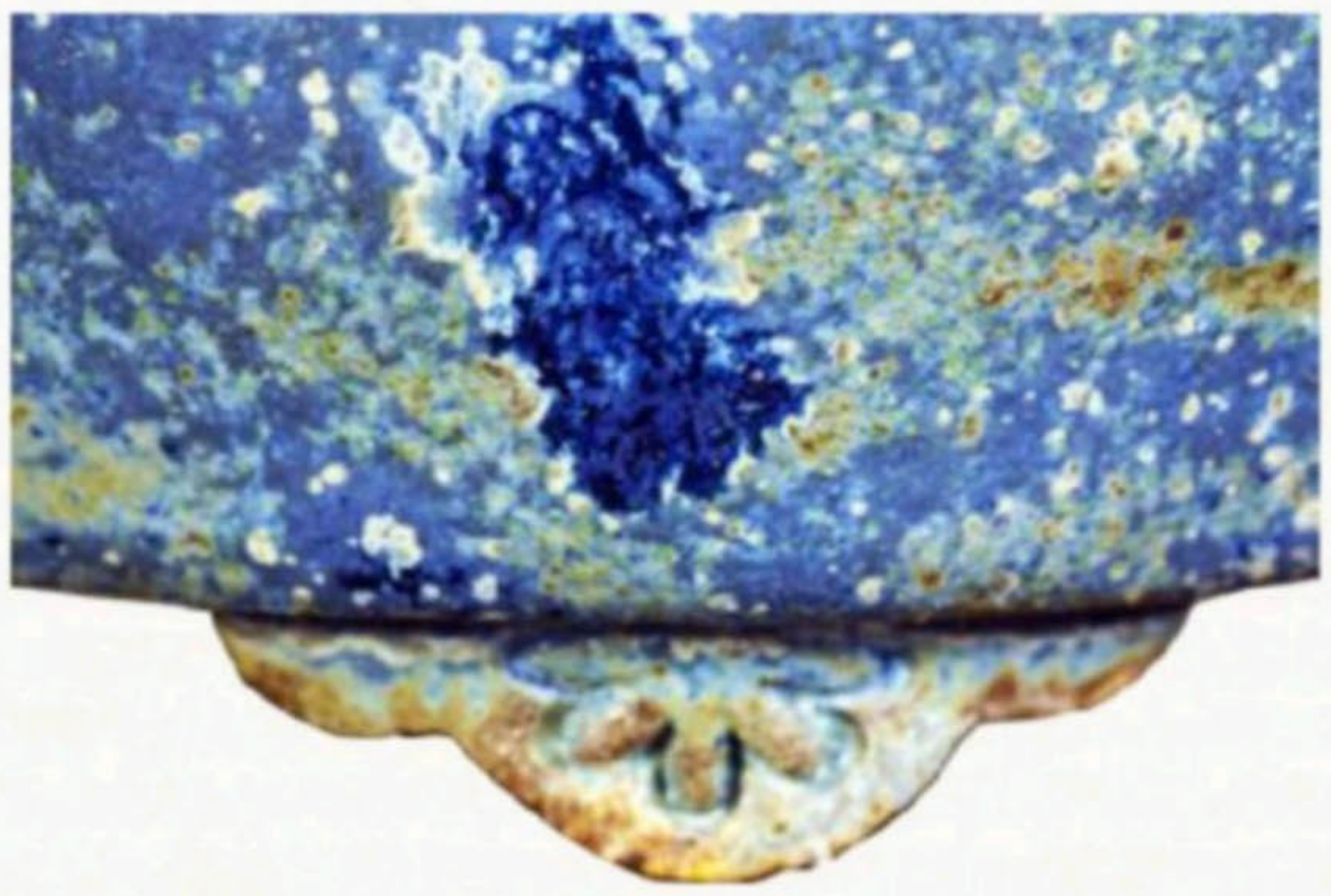
I got into bonsai in 2009, and right from the very beginning I loved bonsai pots. I followed and admired bonsai potters and the bonsai amateurs who were making pots professionally, or just as a hobby. In 2018 I went with my friends to the Trophy in Belgium and, during the drive, my friend Martin told me that he is making bonsai pots for his trees, and that really excited me. Right after returning home, I ordered 20 kg of clay and began my first attempt. I must say that I really liked the first pot I made. It is sitting on my shelf, perhaps waiting for a shohin or accent plant.

How did you acquire the skills?

I've never had a real teacher. I started by watching videos onYoutube (from the late Andrew Pearson whose work I really admire, and Yukizyou Nakano). I watched online step-by-step tutorials. Every mistake, each failed piece is an excellent way to improve, but it's sometimes a hard, long process to determine the problem. I try to analyse the results after every firing, but I would still like to take some lessons from someone more experienced here in Europe, or in Japan, to get some tips and make the process more effective.

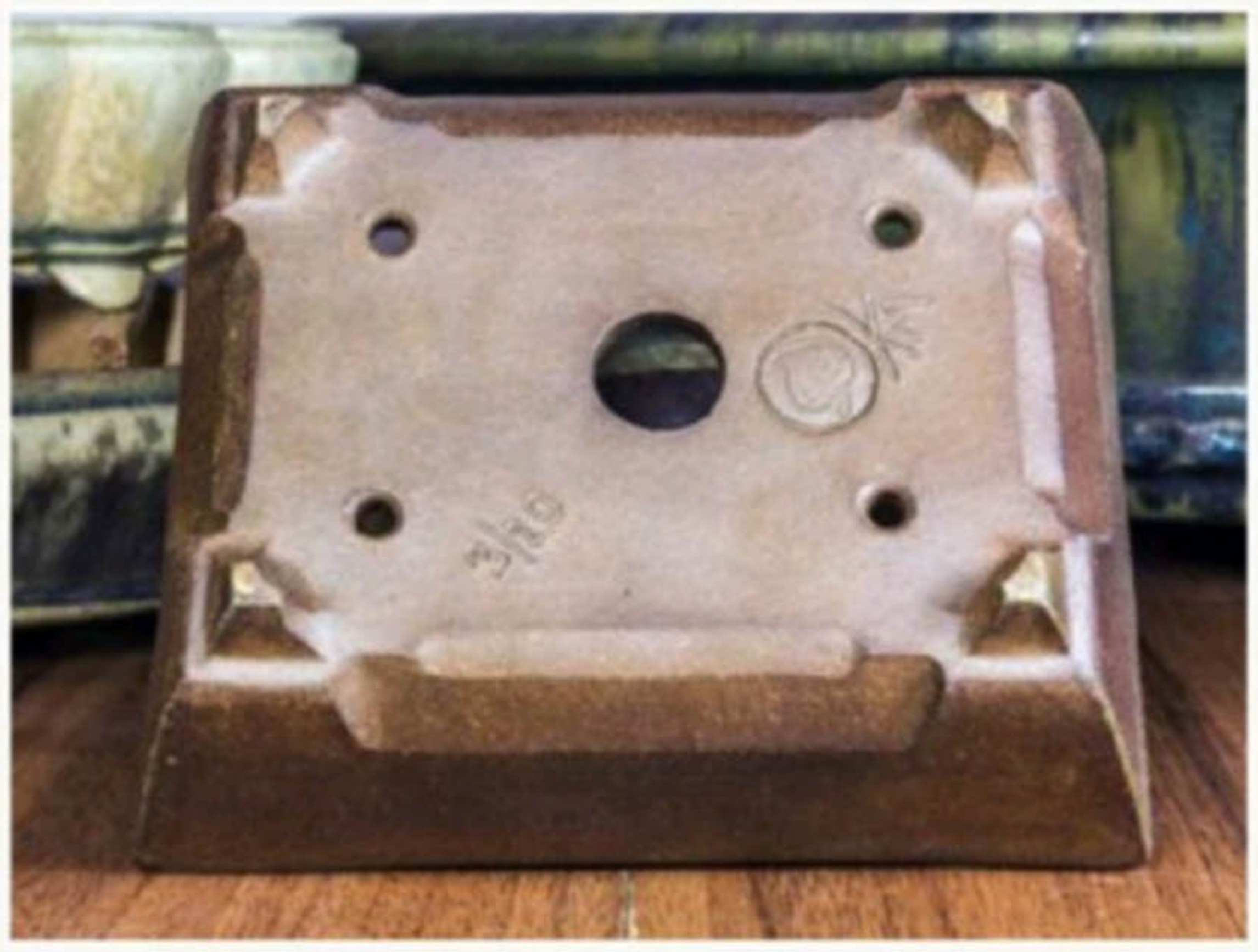
Why ceramic? What is so fascinating about it?

I love clay as a medium. It's an organic material that, for me, is very pleasant to work with. It's also an ancient craft and feels very natural. Apart from a kiln, there is no necessity for any special tools or equipment, with your hands alone you can make almost anything that you visualise. But it's often more difficult than it sounds.



Your thoughts on bonsai ceramics?

I strongly believe that a bonsai pot should complement the tree, not only serving as a reservoir for the rootball, but fit the tree aesthetically. It can usually change or alter the whole composition. I think about every pot and try to make it balanced and proportionally correct. I'd rather like to experiment more with shapes, glazes, structures and patterns. I like traditional, clean designs as well as the more artistic.



Do you make your own glazes?

I mix my own glazes as well as using a few commercial ones. I made hundreds of glaze tests, and I'm still learning the chemistry. I would like to make a glaze that's more predictable with stable results from firing, and firing in most corners of the kiln. I personally find it very difficult. I usually like a smooth finish on unglazed pots, and semi matte or satin glazes, too. I would like to experiment more with longer firing, soda glazes and natural ash deposits, that I love and which is done in an anagama kiln.

Do you use gas, electricity or wood-fired kilns??

I do use a wood fired kiln. I have never actually fired in anything else, but I think it's the most difficult type – especially for a beginner. There are so many variables in the process, mostly with glazed pots. Even the actual loading of the kiln with pots is difficult, because unlike some small pieces, like tea cups and vases, the bonsai pots are usually big and can block the flame so the pot can end up underfired from one side, or warped, or shielded by the pots in front. But I like the natural process of working with fire and final results are more variable, organic, and usually surprising in a good and also bad way as with wood firing there are more losses. In my opinion, every type of firing has its positives and negatives, and maybe a combination of a wood-fired kiln and a smaller electric or gas kiln would be perfect.

What do think of the Japanese glazes, tones and shapes?

Quality Japanese pots are usually well balanced, designed and crafted. I think that there is a huge variety of creative shapes and glazes, especially in the higher-class pots and in shohin pots. I take a lot of inspiration from them, but I don't want to copy the exact shapes and I think that there is a huge space for creativity and modification. I love the organic, yet refined aesthetic of Japanese traditional kitchen and tea ware, which I would like to bring into bonsai pots.

Are the handmade pots being appreciated and valued?

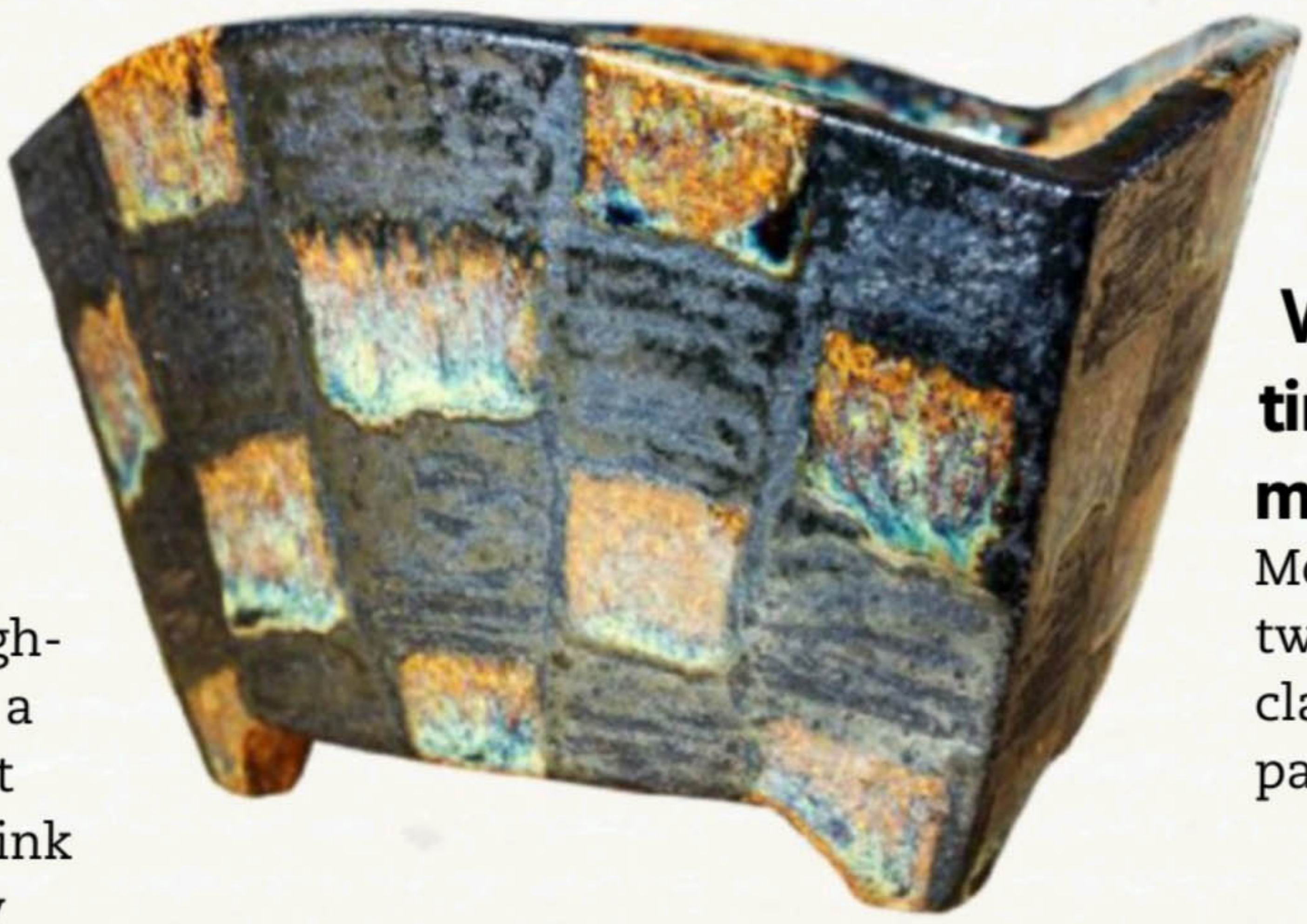
I appreciate all hand-made products and crafts if made properly with an aim for quality. I think that hand-made and crafted products are, in general, valued increasingly as we are overwhelmed with often low-quality mass production stuff from food to furniture. Bonsai pots are also special, because every bonsai tree is more or less individual and requires a different pot shape and size to reach its full potential. The hand-made process is ideal for this.

Any other interests or hobbies?

I like hiking, mountains and nature. Also woodland photography, gardening, old cars, books, and I listen to a lot a of music all the time, from Indie rock to Metalcore and Melodic death metal, sometimes some classics like Bach or Vivaldi.

What do you like about bonsai and making pots ?

In both bonsai and pottery, I much like the process and the craft and creativity that they offer. But the end result is very different. A bonsai tree is never finished, it's a continuous process of working and refining and often, over time, changing and refining again. But the bonsai pot is the opposite, it can be worked for a short time, and once it's fired, it is usually finished.



Which are the techniques you apply?

I'm building all my pots from slabs. I've never actually tried anything else. I like the freedom and versatility, that the hand making process offers, even though it is probably the most time consuming. Most of my pots are built from the bottom slab up, using slab walls, then I secure and stiffen joints, reshape the walls, add coiled upper rim,then it's the long process of cleaning and refining the shape. Finally, base holes and feet. I'm usually adding and carving a lot of clay from the basic slab body to get the shape I want, or to make some curves, edges, rims and so on.

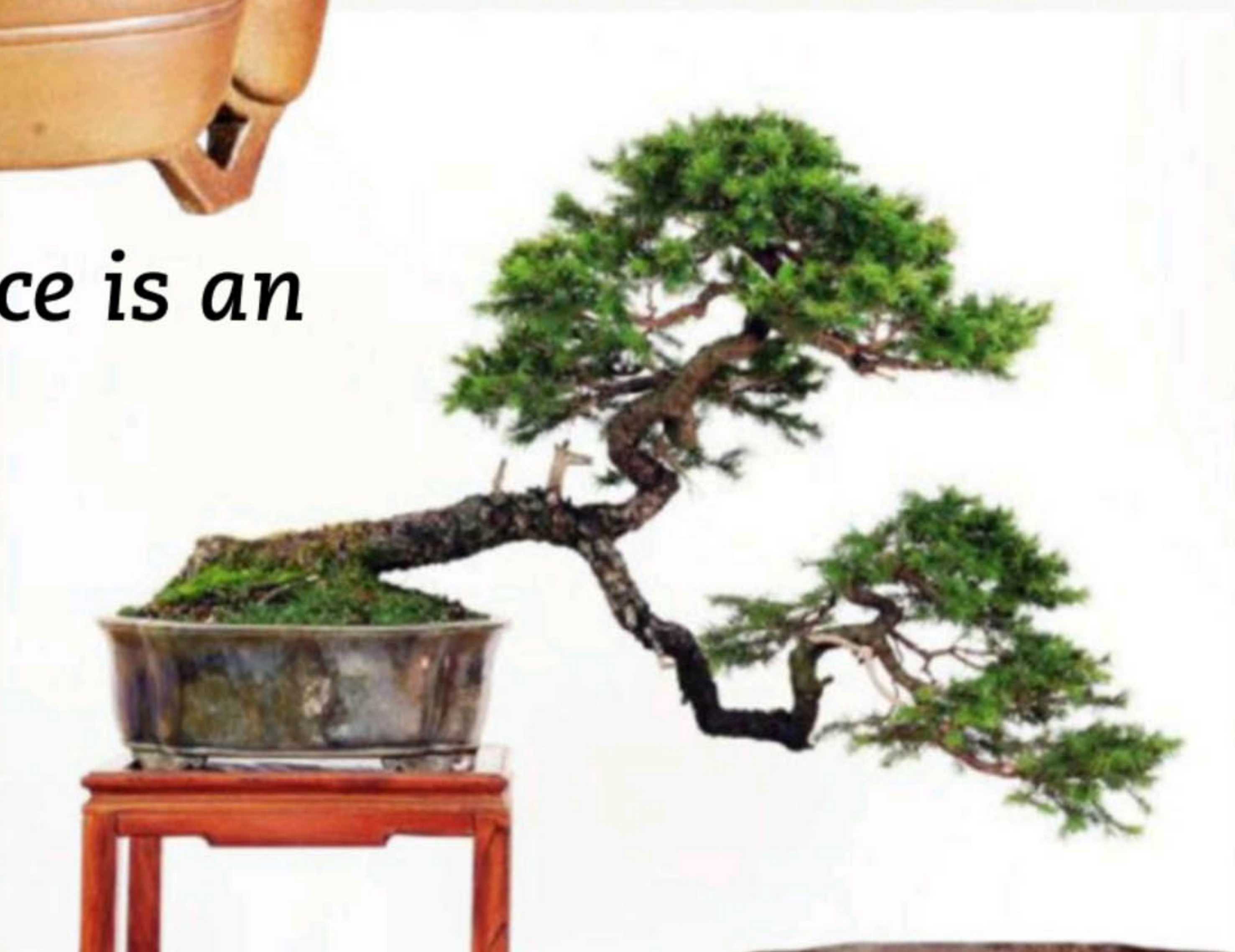
Can you make a living out of it?

I want to make pots more often and shift the working balance slightly towards the pottery, but I don't plan to make pottery alone. I like the diversity of the things I am doing now.

What was the most difficult, or time-consuming pot you ever made?

Most time-consuming was probably the two big commission pots I made of darker clay with carved dragons inlayed with pale yellow clay.

> *Every mistake, each failed piece is an excellent way to improve.*



Your worst mistake was what?

I've made a lot of warped pots, or pots with some cracks, but that is probably the usual process of learning. However, I'd consider my worst mistake to be not making enough pots.

What or who inspires you?

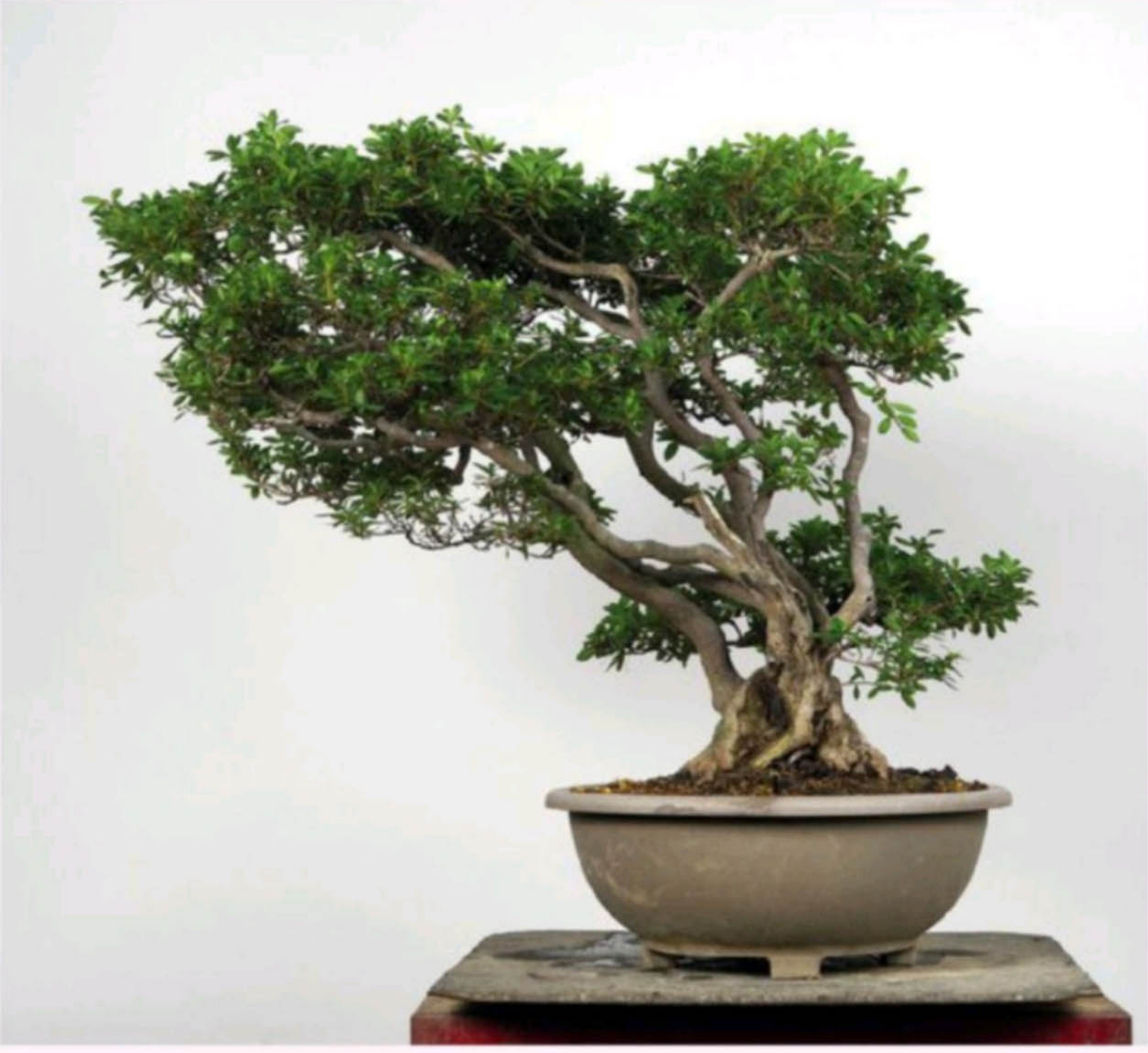
I get inspiration from all different types of art and craft. Sometimes I see some shape or pattern, that I'm trying to evolve and compose to a bonsai pot. In nature, too, there are many interesting shapes in the flowers, tree cones, seeds and so on. I admire many bonsai potters such as Tomas Gramming, Matjaž Raimondi and Tom Benda, and many more, who inspire me to be creative and find new shapes and ideas.

BLOSSOMING ROCK

Osamu Fukudate creates a rock planting with Satsuki

Text and photography: Kinbon, Japan

A Satsuki of the Kikoushi variety grown in a clump style isn't really interesting as a candidate for formal bonsai, so Osamu Fukudate uses the good features and adds a rock to give it more character



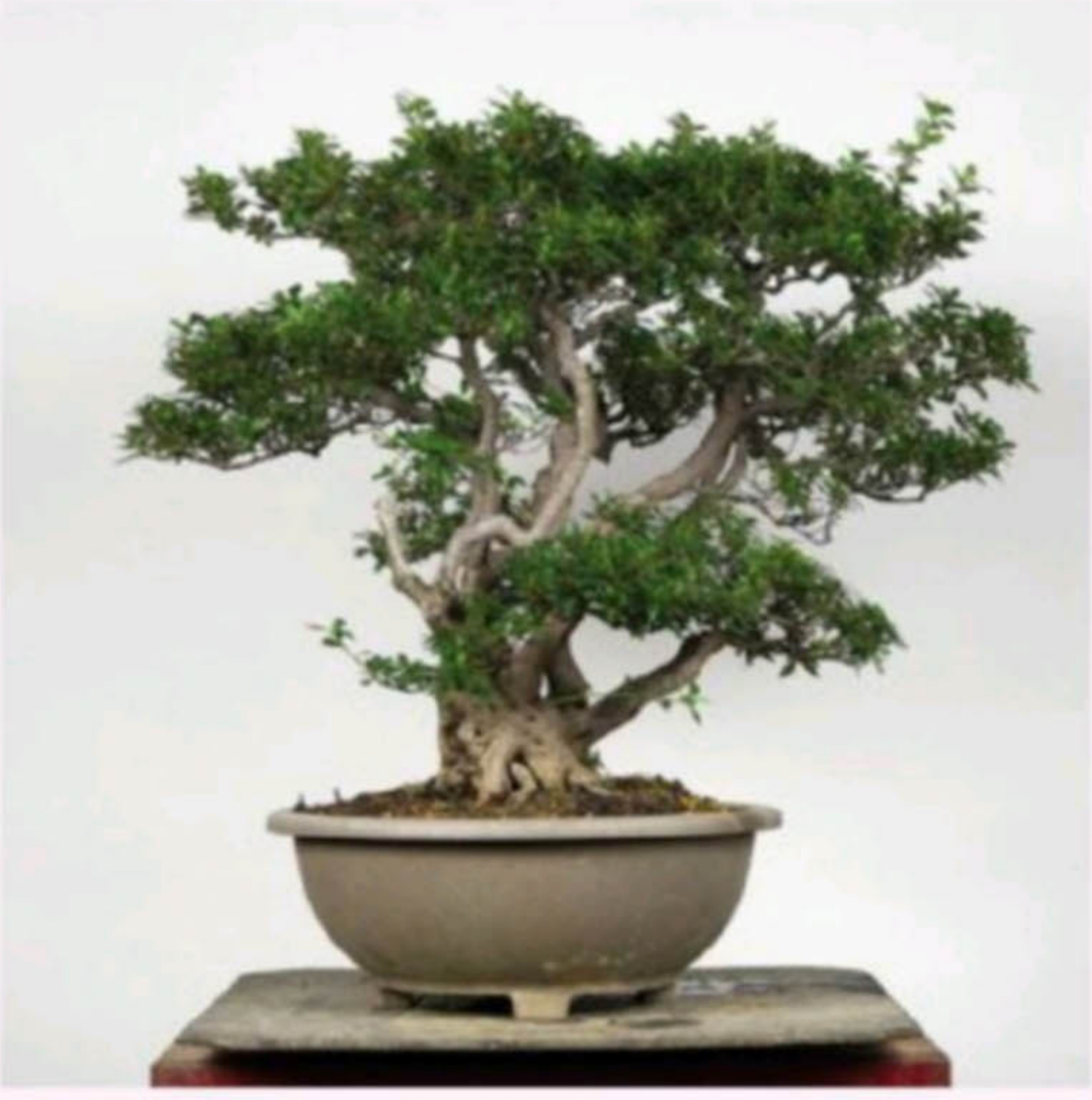
Satsuki. Height: 68 cm Width: 82 cm.
The front before the work began. It is perfectly possible to create a clump style or windswept from this material

A recently acquired piece of material, with an interesting shari feature at the base, shows a sense of wildness, while the clustered trunks are full of character. The branches have been carefully trimmed, which adds to its undoubted charm. Osamu Fukudate has been developing ideas to emphasize these qualities.

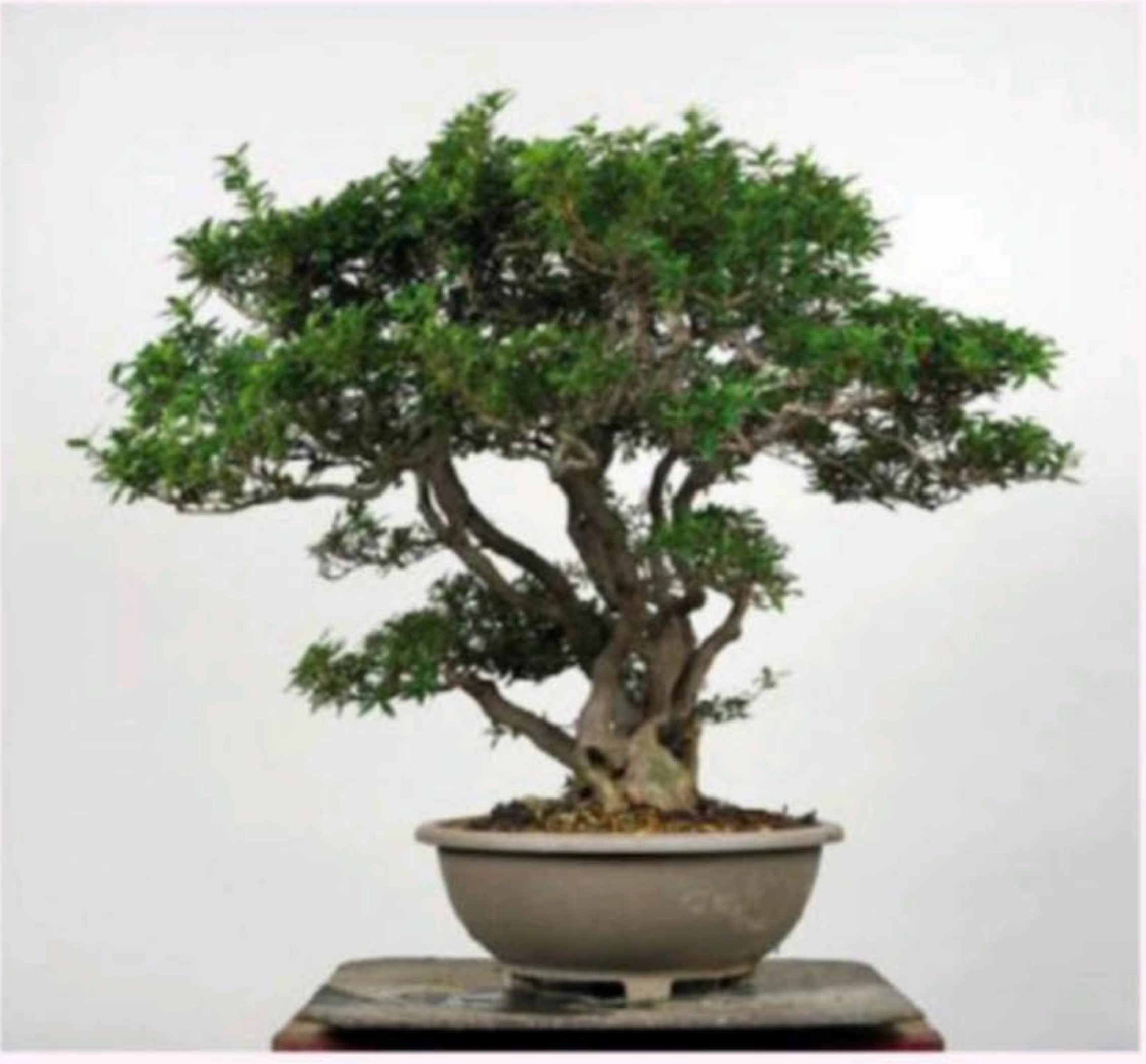
The variety Kikoushi is old and though there are some profuse trees like this one, it has a tendency to suffer die-back on the trunk when branches are cut. The flowers are medium-sized, bell-shaped, with a pale white base. Rather than focusing on the flowers, the aim is to highlight the tree's form.

A different planting angle?

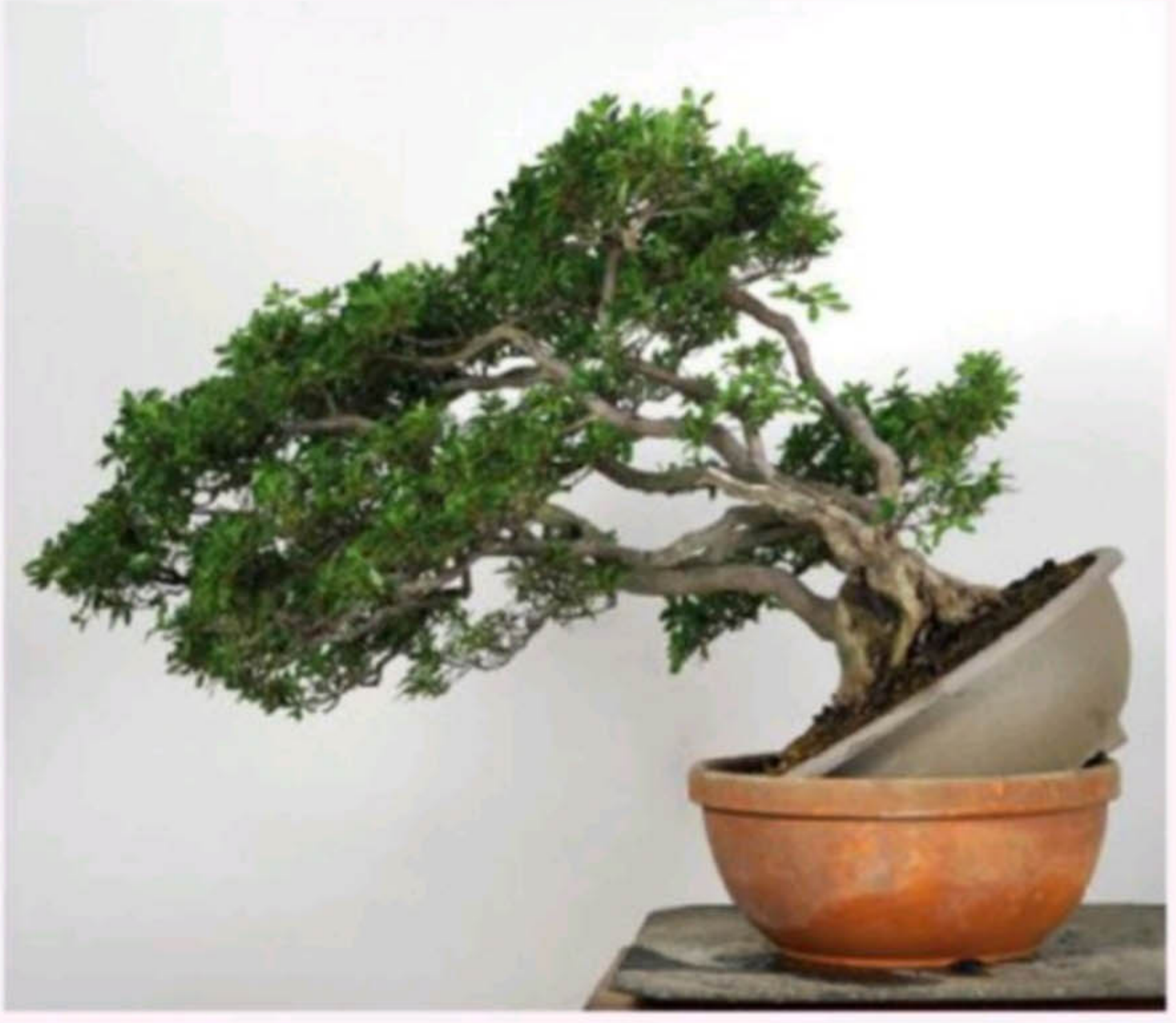
It seems that this tree was cultivated as a multi-trunk style, but in order to improve it further, Osamu began by looking as the options for the tree's form.
Of course, reworking it as a multi-trunk is one possibility. The natural, harmonious appearance of the branches suggests that the tree has likely been carefully shaped with clip and grow techniques over time. Osamu paid close attention to this branch quality saying, 'This time, I won't use much fine wire.' Though in order to make a good transformation photoshoot we were expecting wire to be used. Instead, he said that, 'I'll create a rock planting.' So, to start the process, the planting angle had to be considered.



Seen from the right



Seen from the left



Front view after changing the angle. Osamu tilted the tree significantly to the left. The idea of turning it into a windswept style is taken to the very extreme, further emphasizing the flow towards the left

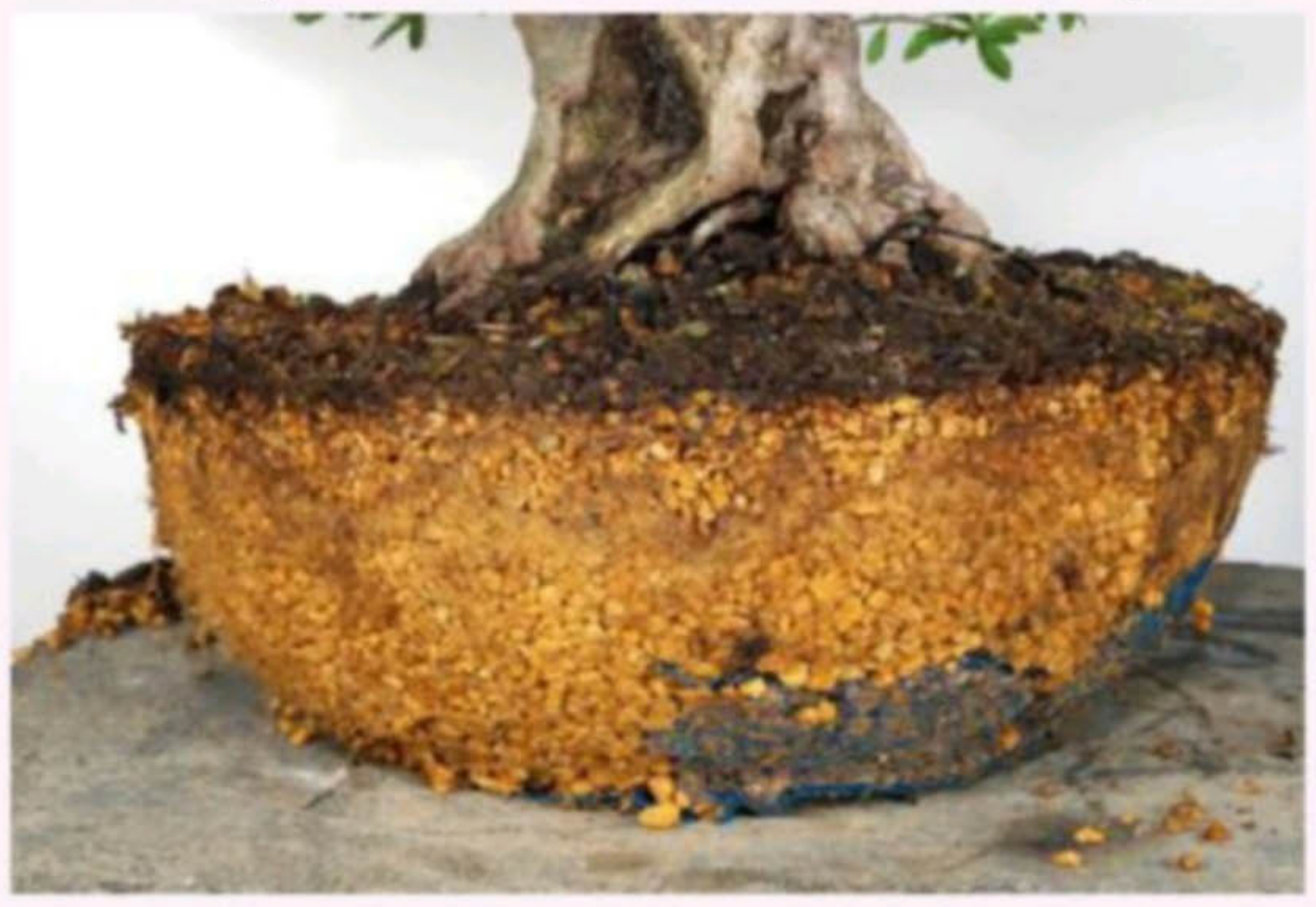
Reason for light root work

Considering the significant change in angle, we thought that the roots on the lower left and upper right would need significant attention.

'If I were to put the tree back in a pot, such root adjustments would, of course, become necessary. However, as the goal is a creation placed on stone, it is possible to plant the tree without disturbing the roots.' It seems that the stones to be used were already prepared.

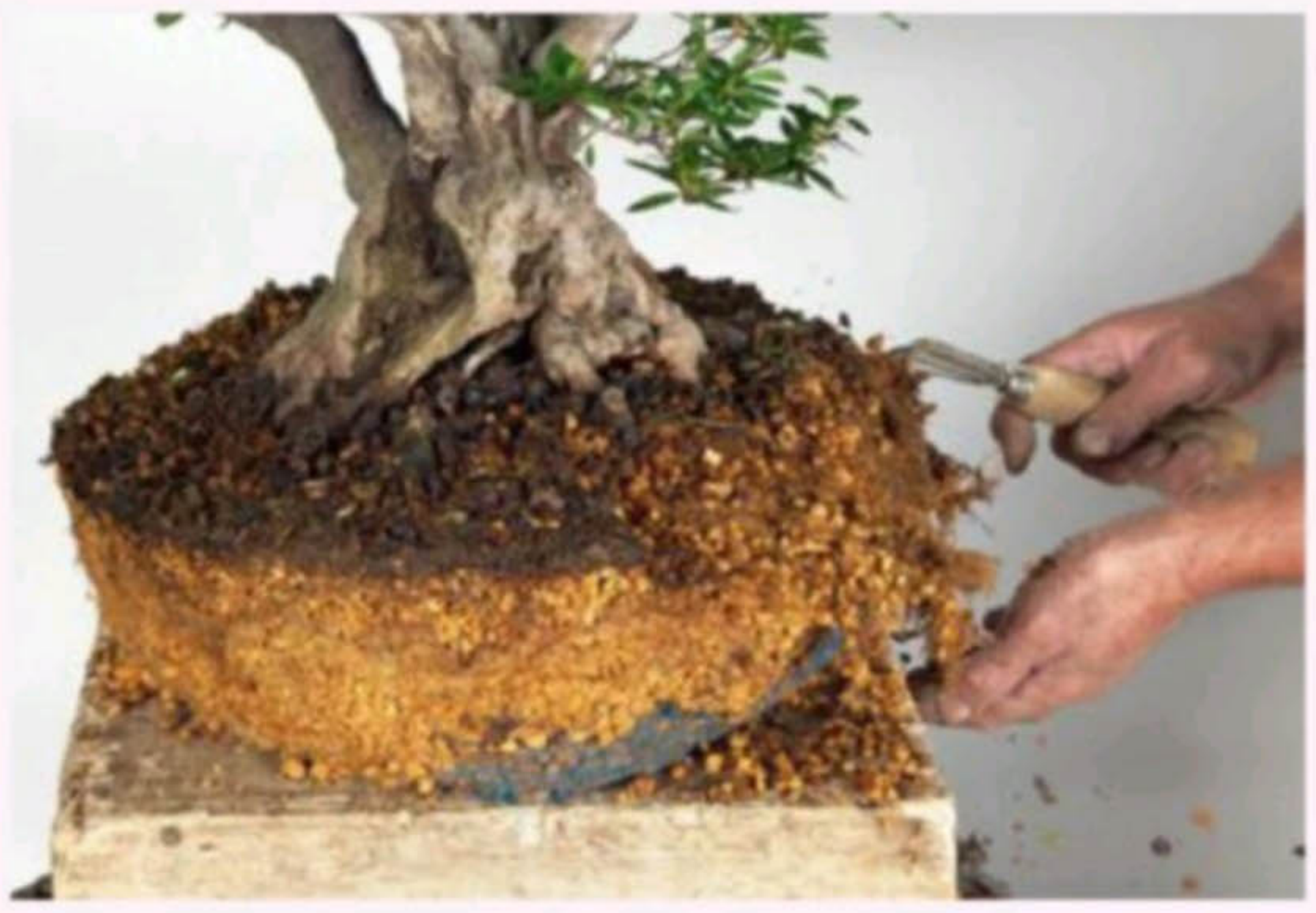
Osamu removes the tree from the pot

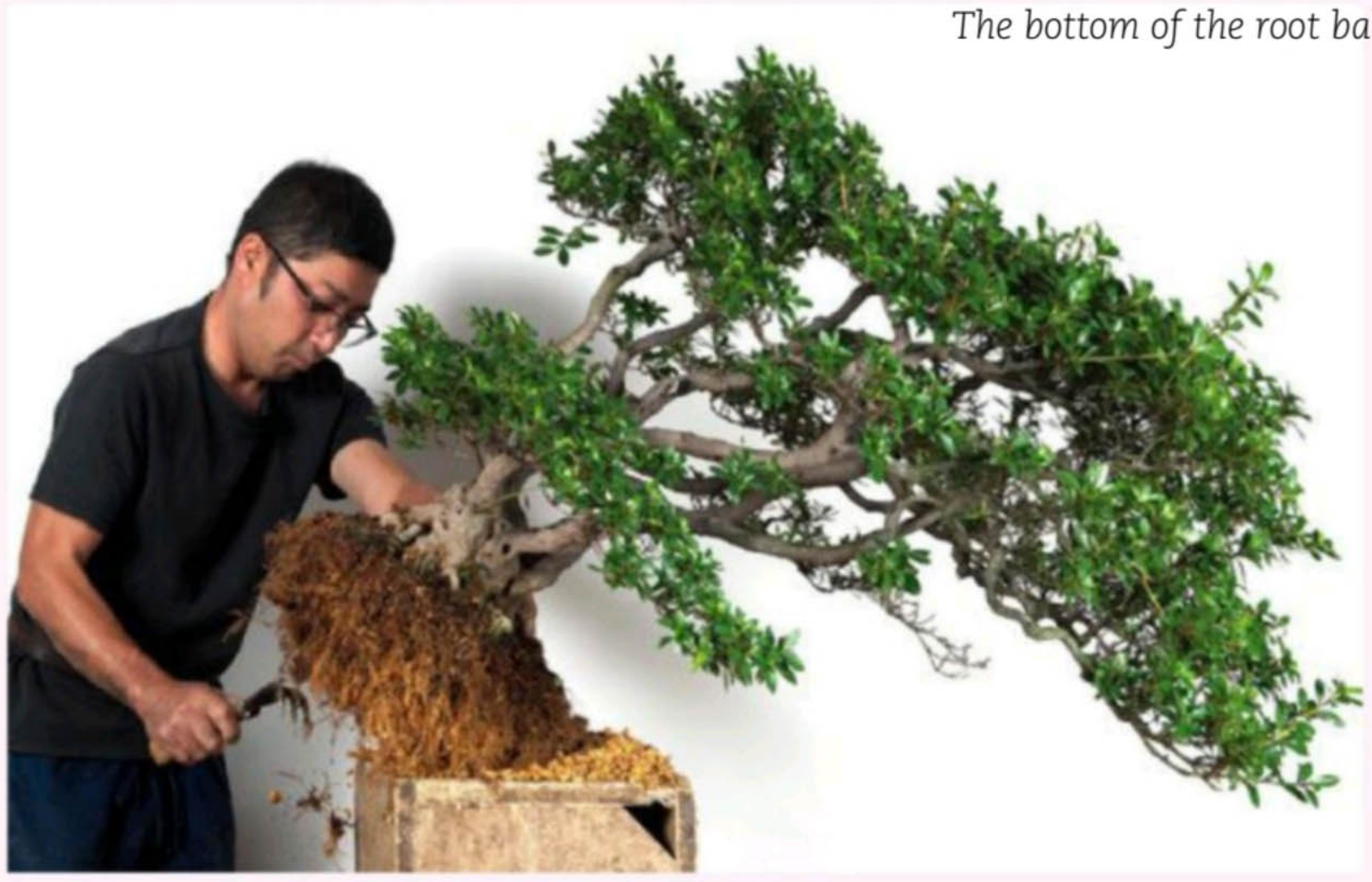
It has been two years since it was last repotted. The condition of the soil and roots is better than expected



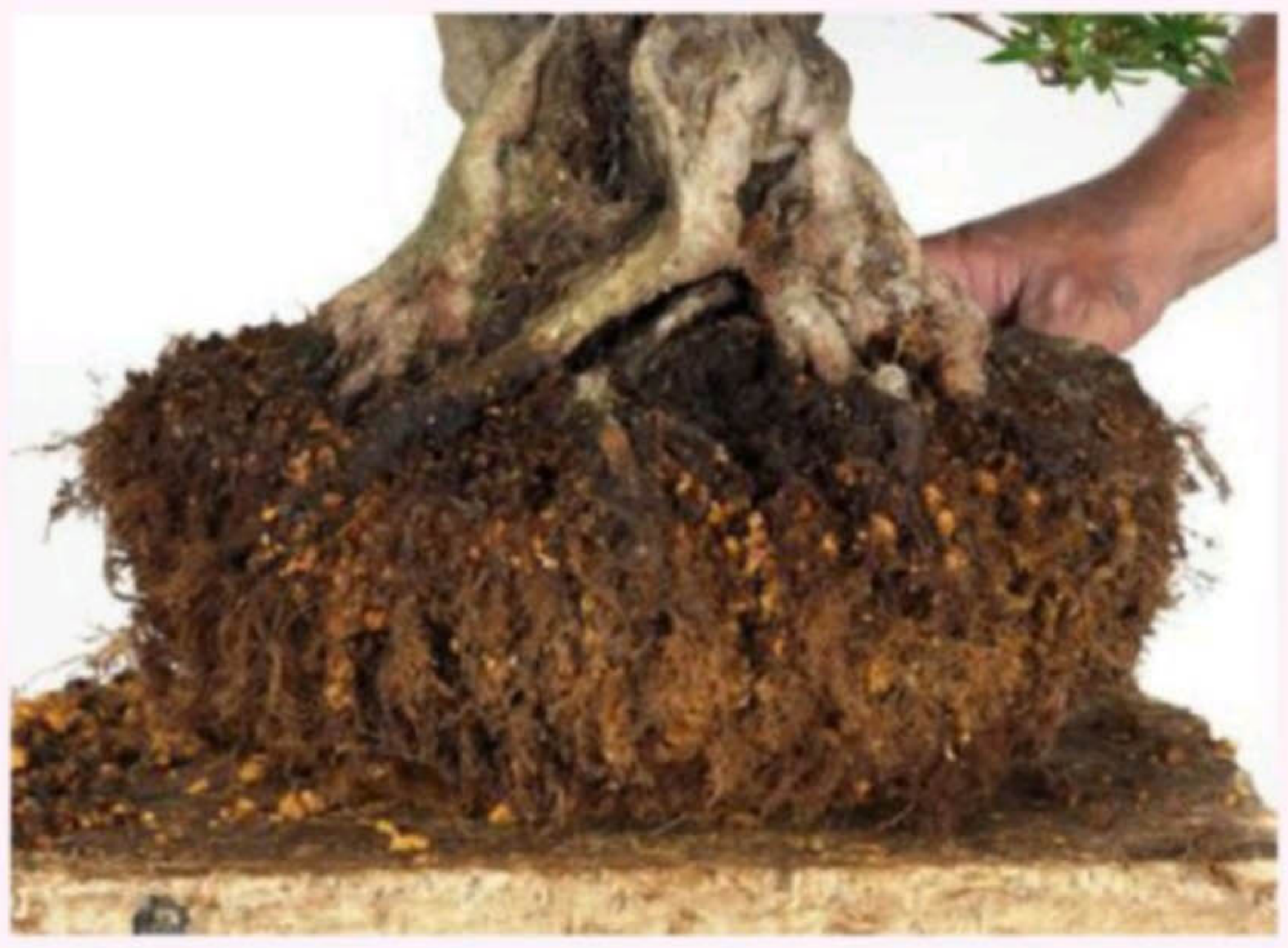
The bottom of the root ball is lightly broken down

The outer edge of the root ball is carefully broken down





After root work is finished. Considering the dramatic change of angle, the amount of necessary root work is surprisingly little

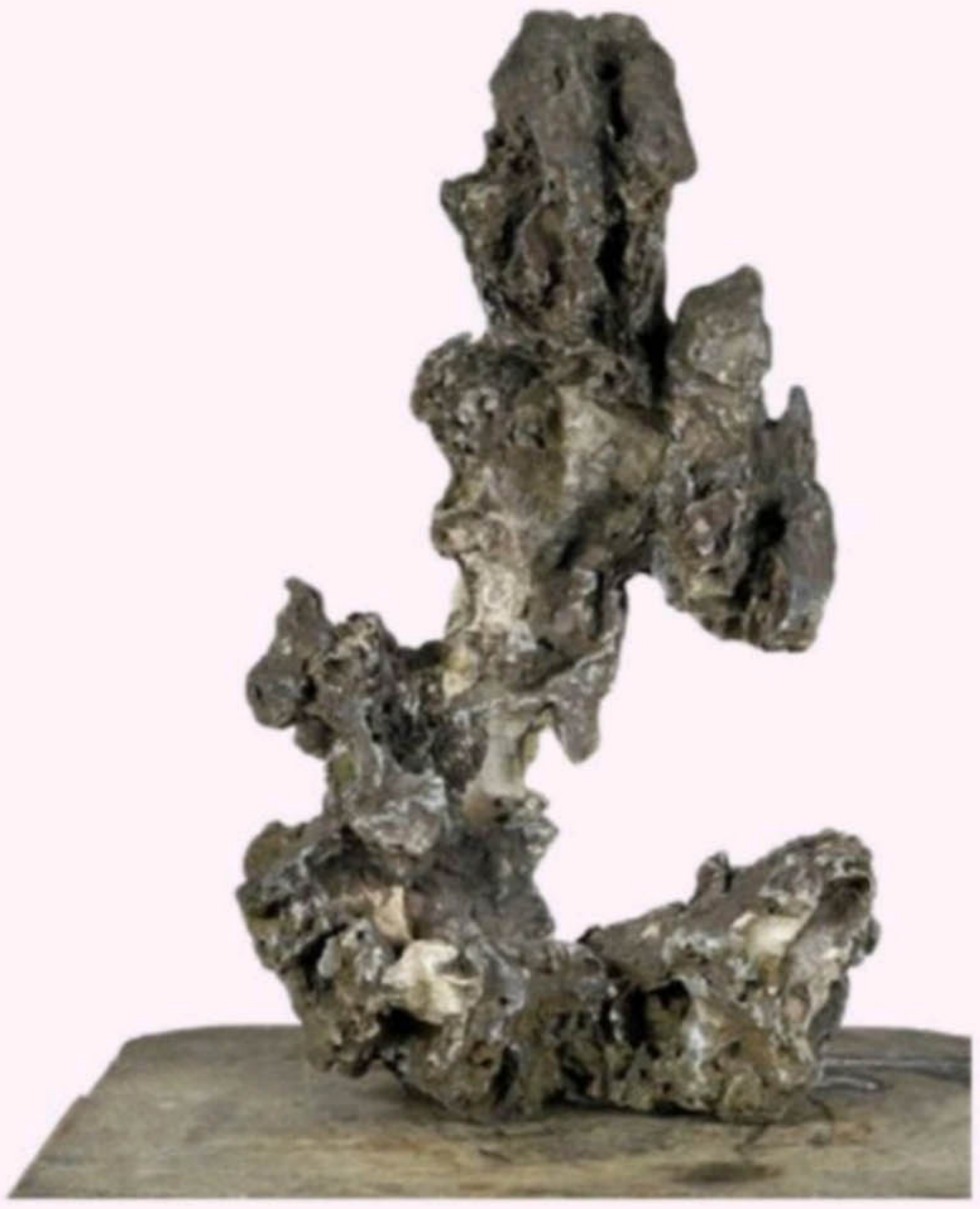


Reconsidering the idea of a rock planting

The plan was to plant the tree on a rock, with a particular focus on determining the appropriate type of stone to use. Two types were prepared for consideration: a flat stone and an upright one. Although the idea of using a Kurama curved stone was also explored, no suitable-sized stone was available, so the decision was narrowed down to these two options. As for the root pruning, the reason for not trimming the roots aggressively was that this particular variety tends to develop die-back and desiccated trunk damage if its vigour declines, which should always be avoided.

It seemed that Osamu had already firmly decided he would attach the tree to an upright stone. With this in his mind, the work proceeded accordingly.

It was not impossible to attach the tree to the flat stone, but doing so wouldn't be significantly different from planting it in a pot, and it would likely result in a slightly raised planting



From the beginning, Osamu had intended to use this upright stone, even securing the wire in place beforehand. Where would you consider the tree should be attached?

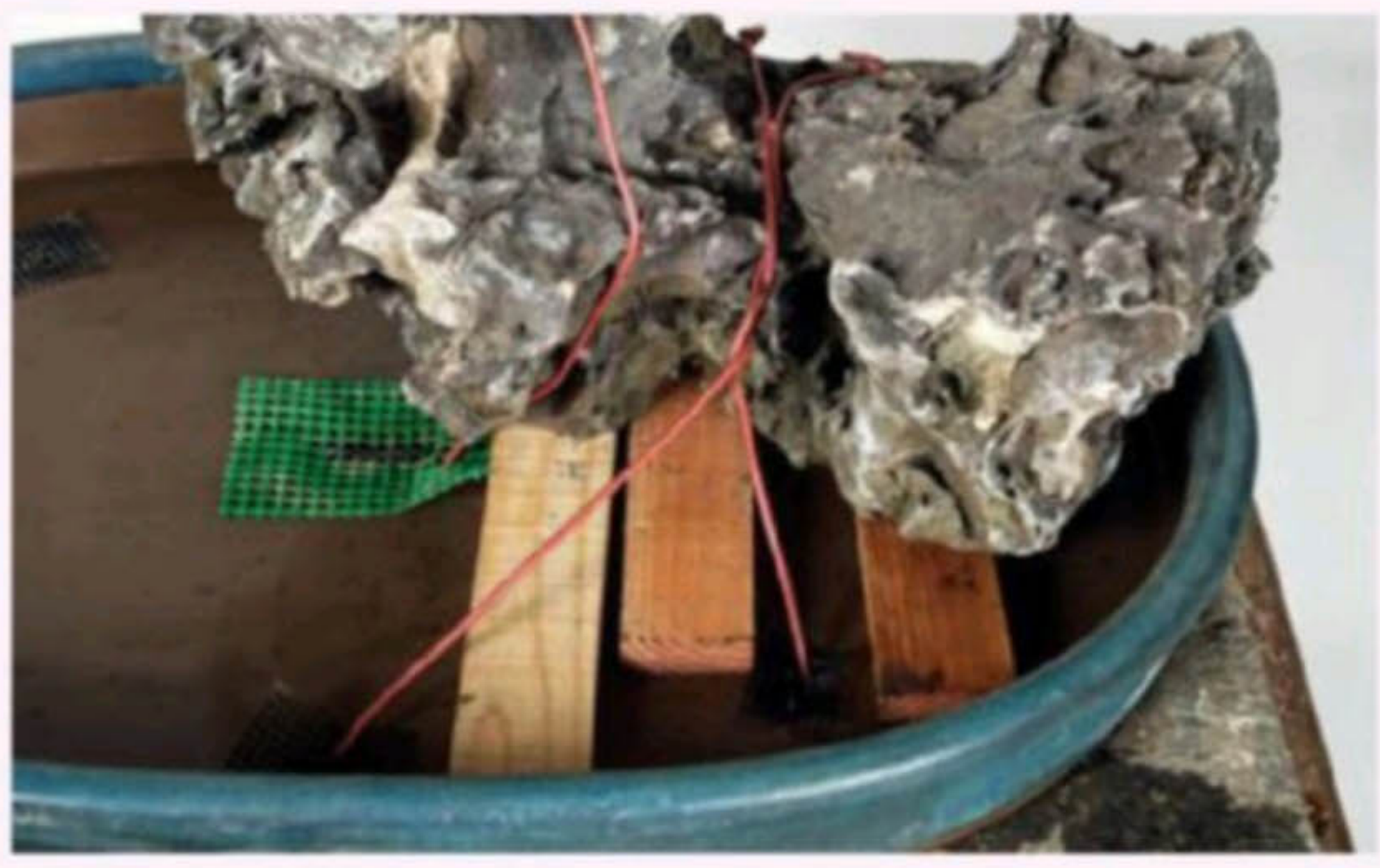
Securely fixing the stone to the pot

Since the upright stone was unstable and would not stand by itself, securing it firmly to the pot was a crucial step in the process.

Given the stone's weight and slight instability, the junior apprentice, Rafael, assisted by holding the stone until it was fully secured. The work was carried out thoroughly and with consideration to the orientation and position of the tree.

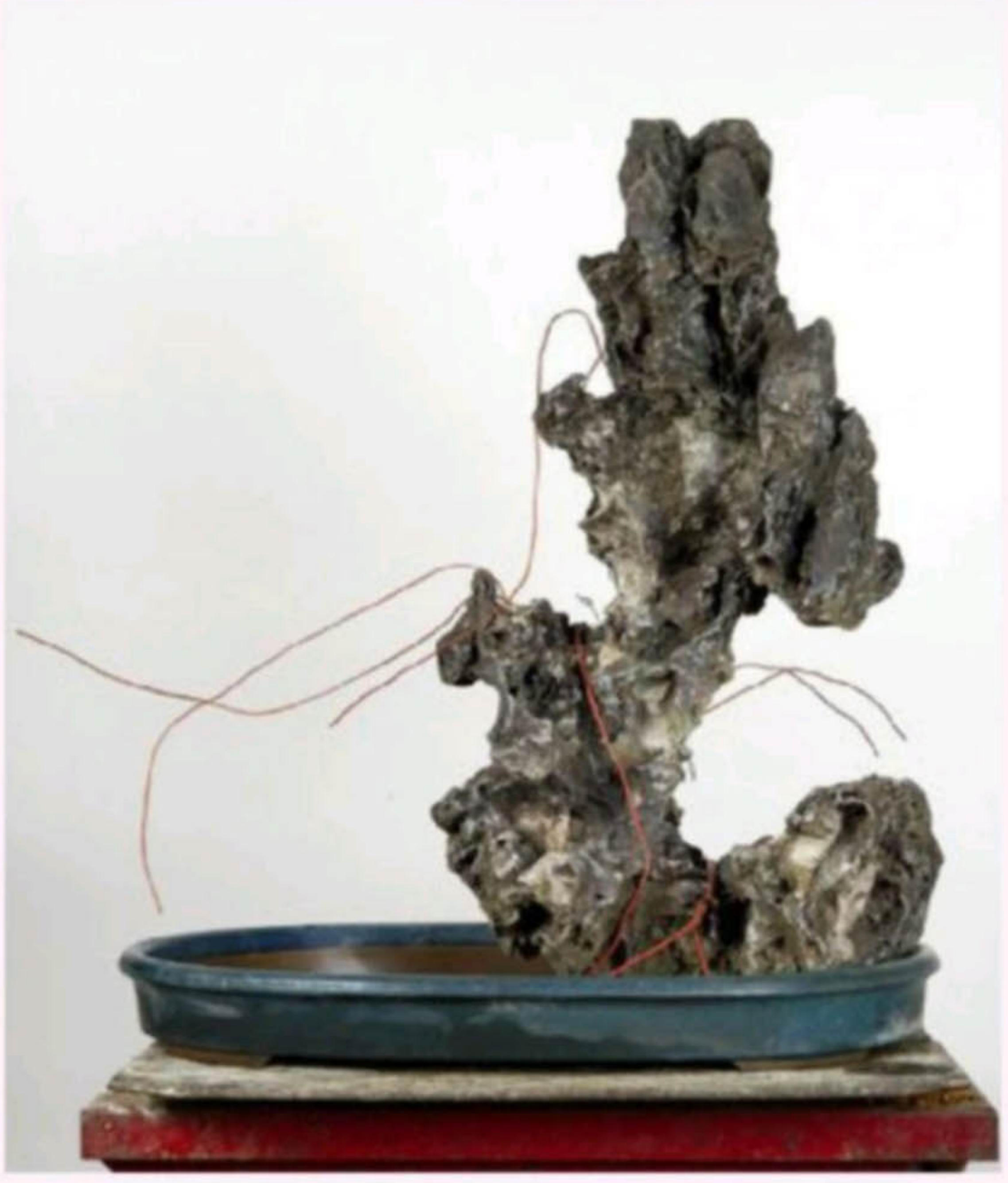
A sturdy pot capable of supporting the stone's weight was prepared

Since the stone was upright, it needed to be securely fixed to the pot to prevent it from toppling over. At this stage, Rafael stepped in to help support the stone

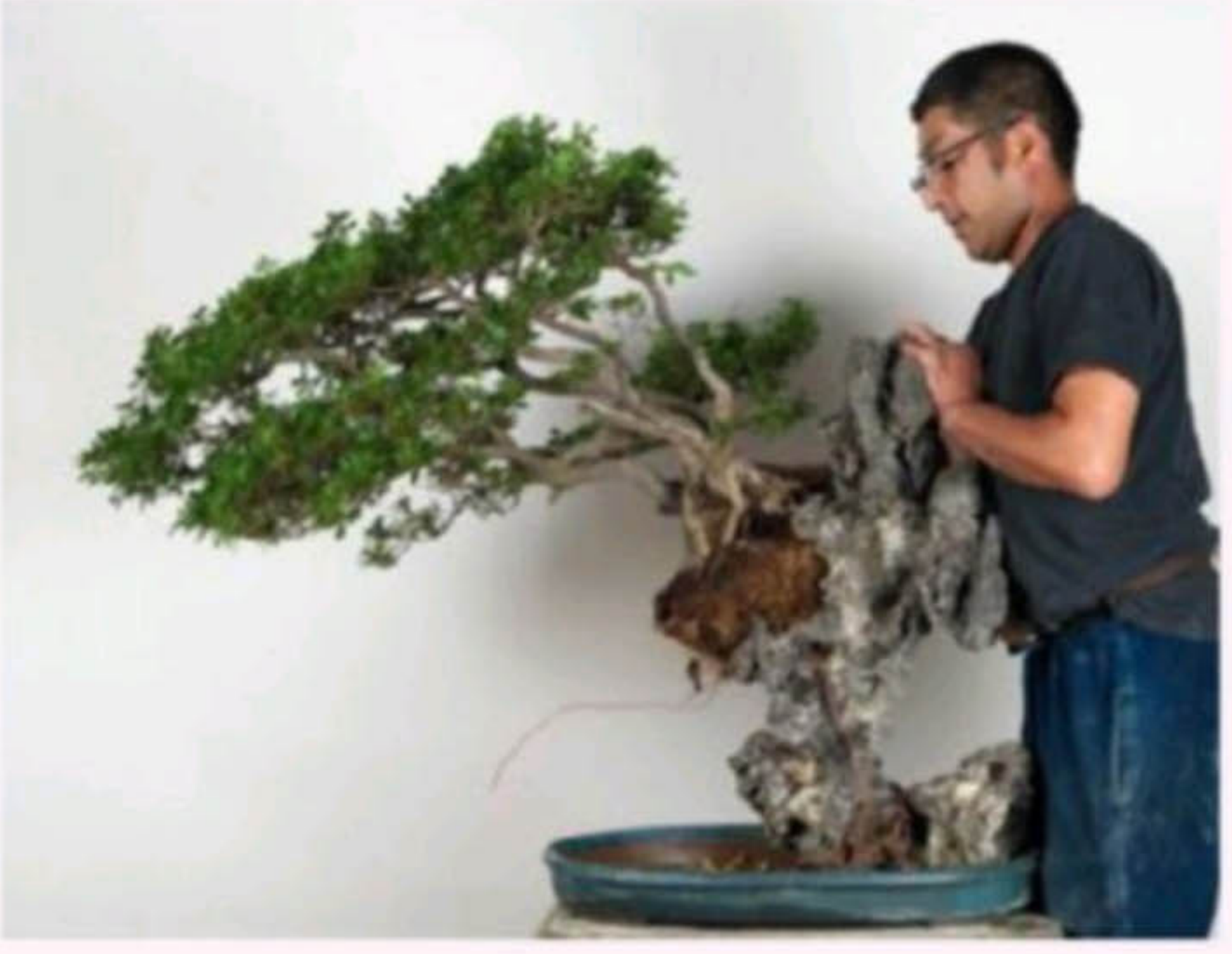


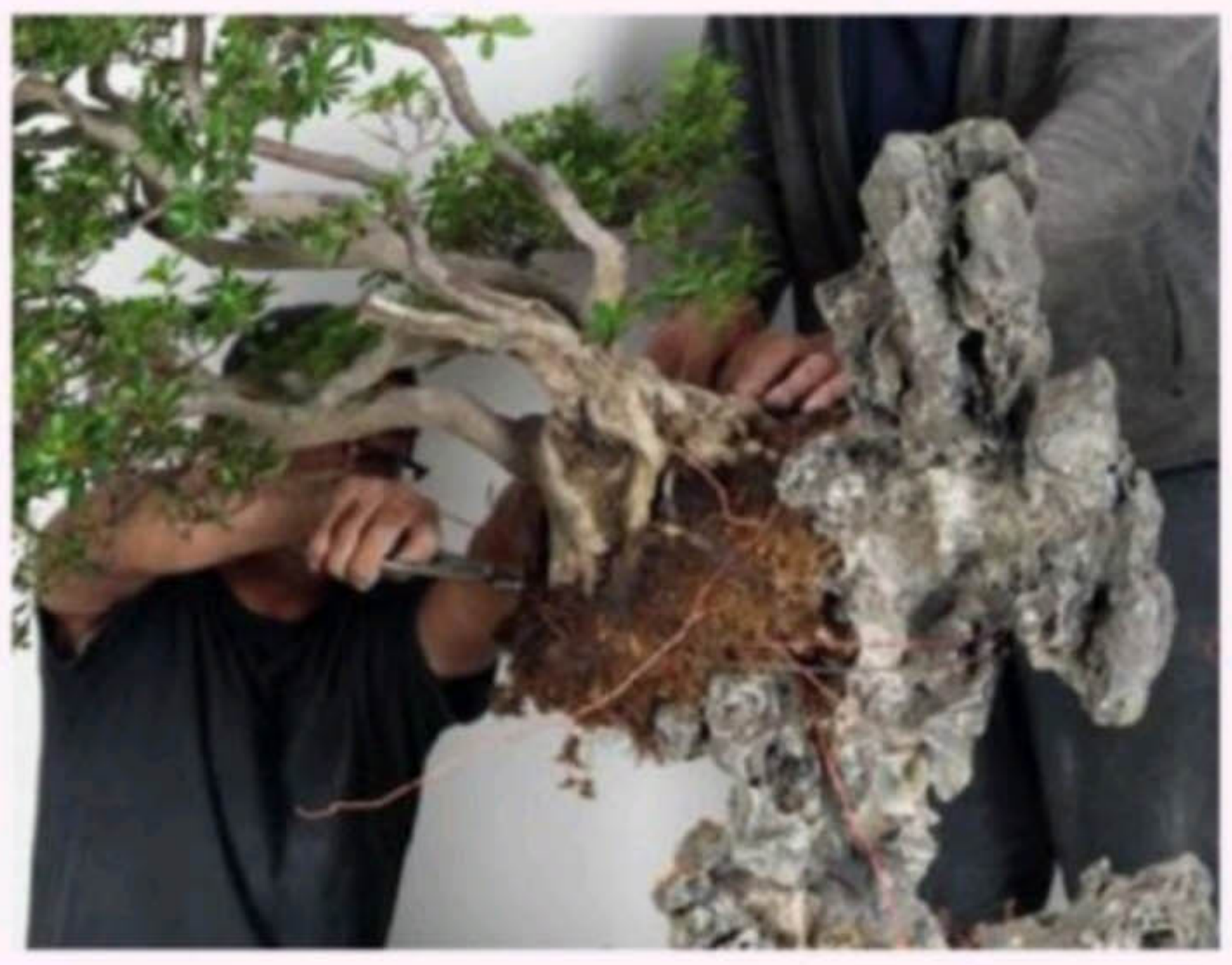
To prevent the stone from sinking, some pieces of wood were wedged underneath

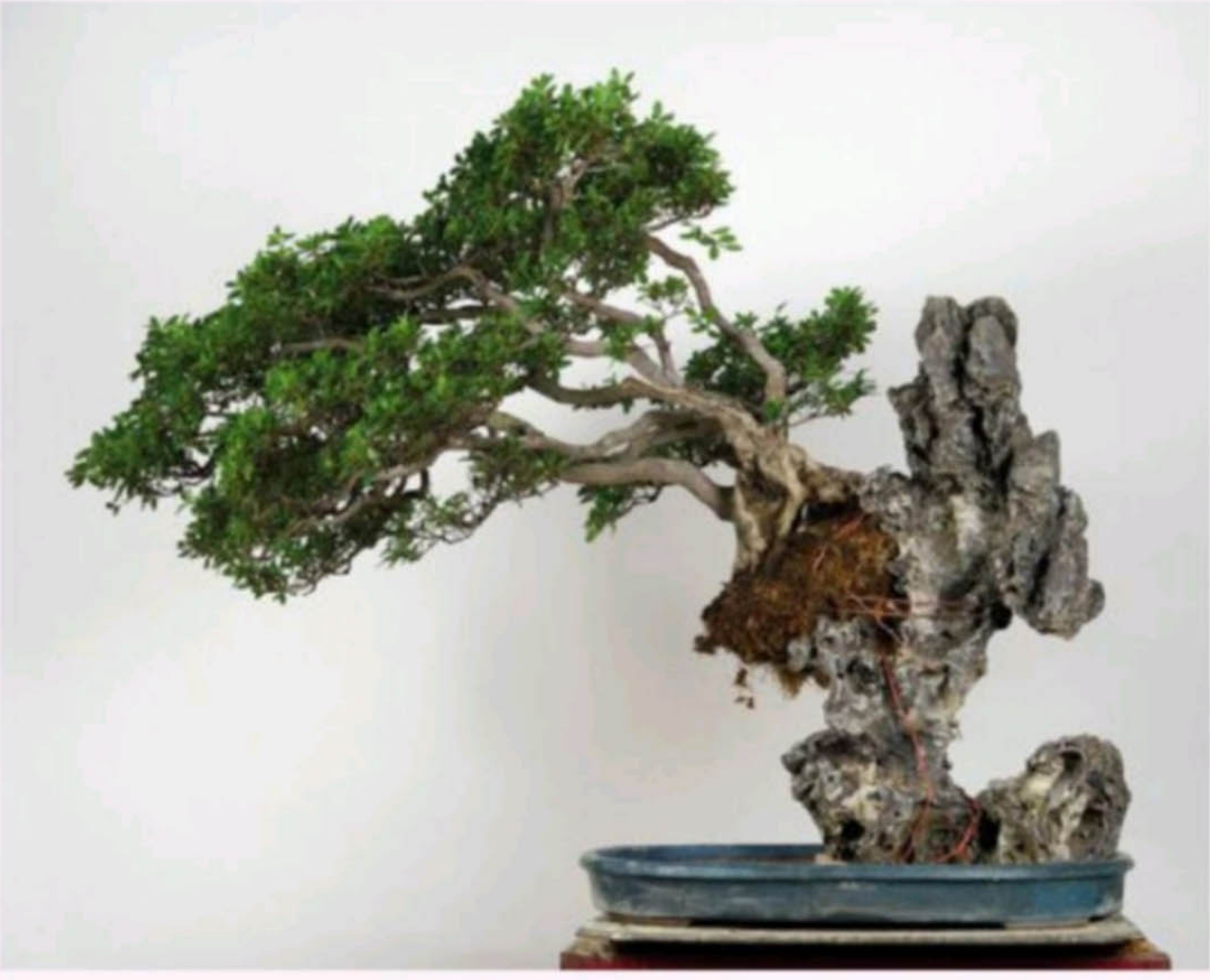
After fixing the stone in the pot. Positioned slightly to the right of the pot, it became clear that the tree would flow to the left, giving a clear indication of how the tree would be attached



Positioning the tree on the rock


The roots were carefully drawn towards the hollow on the left of the stone. A planting angle had already been confirmed


Since the root ball was slanted, the tree was securely fastened to the stone with wire to prevent it from moving

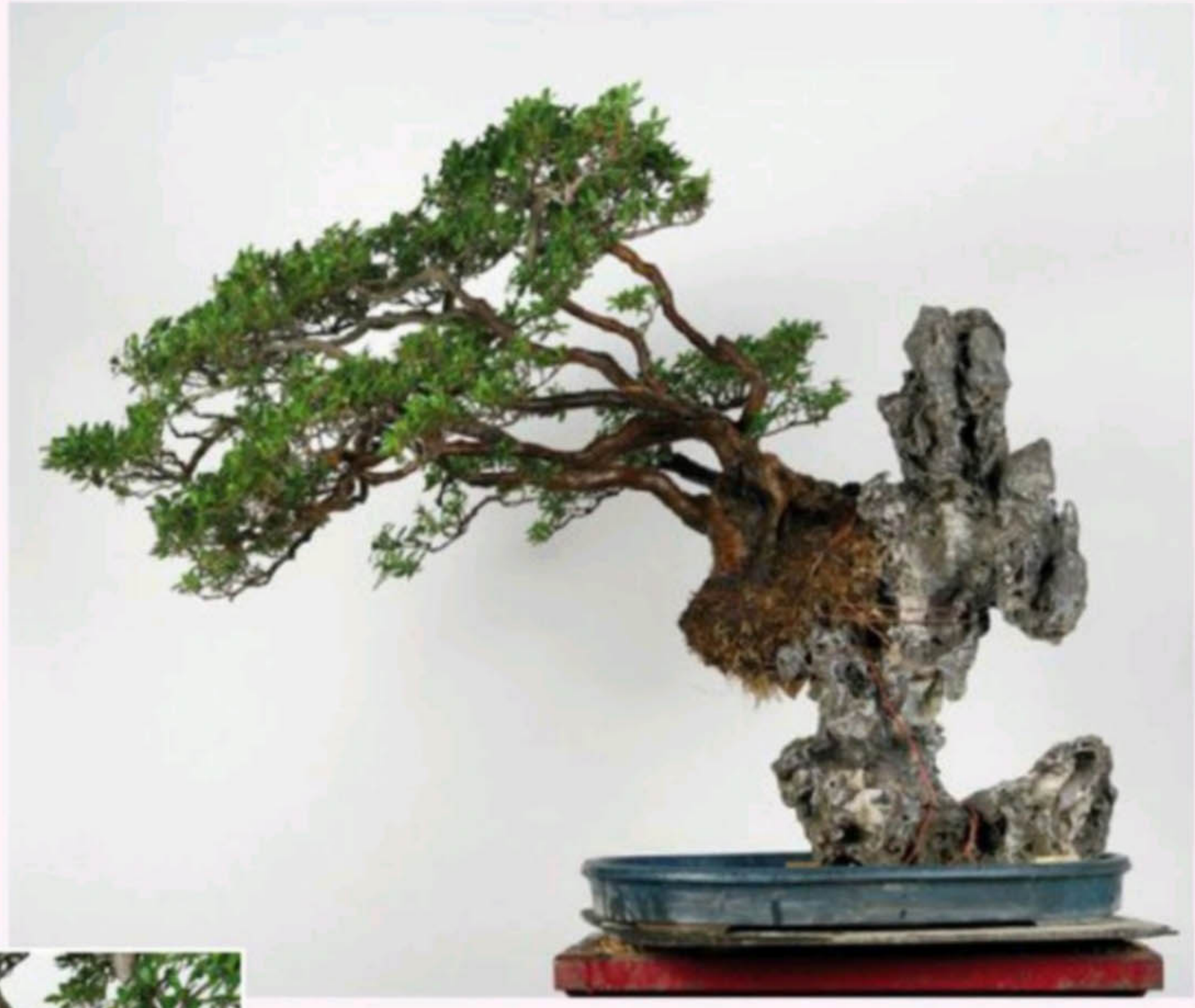

After securing the tree, no branches were touched at this stage. This made the tree appear slightly oversized in its current state

Creating jin and thinning out the branches

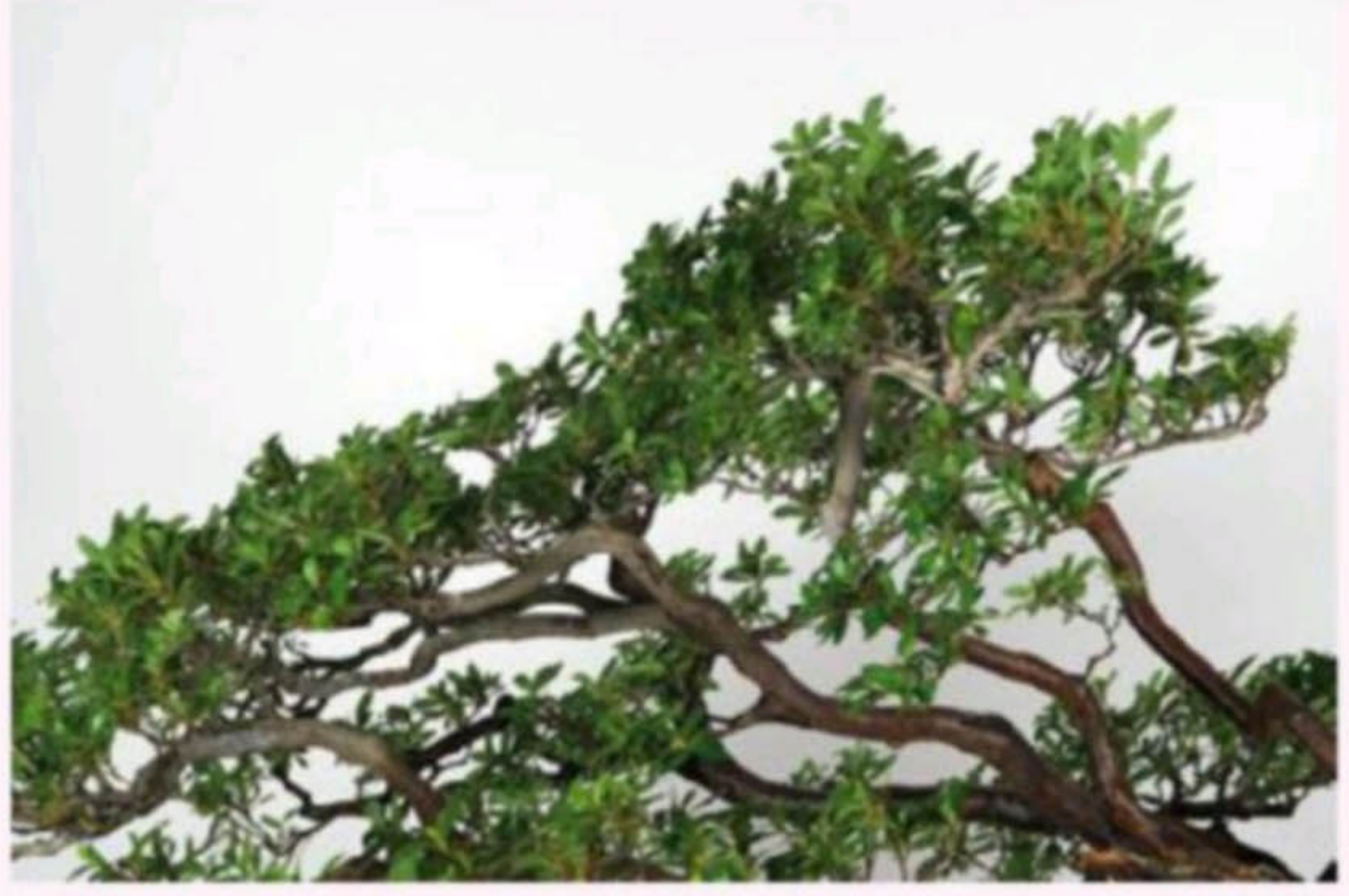
Any of the remaining stubs from previously cut branches are dealt with

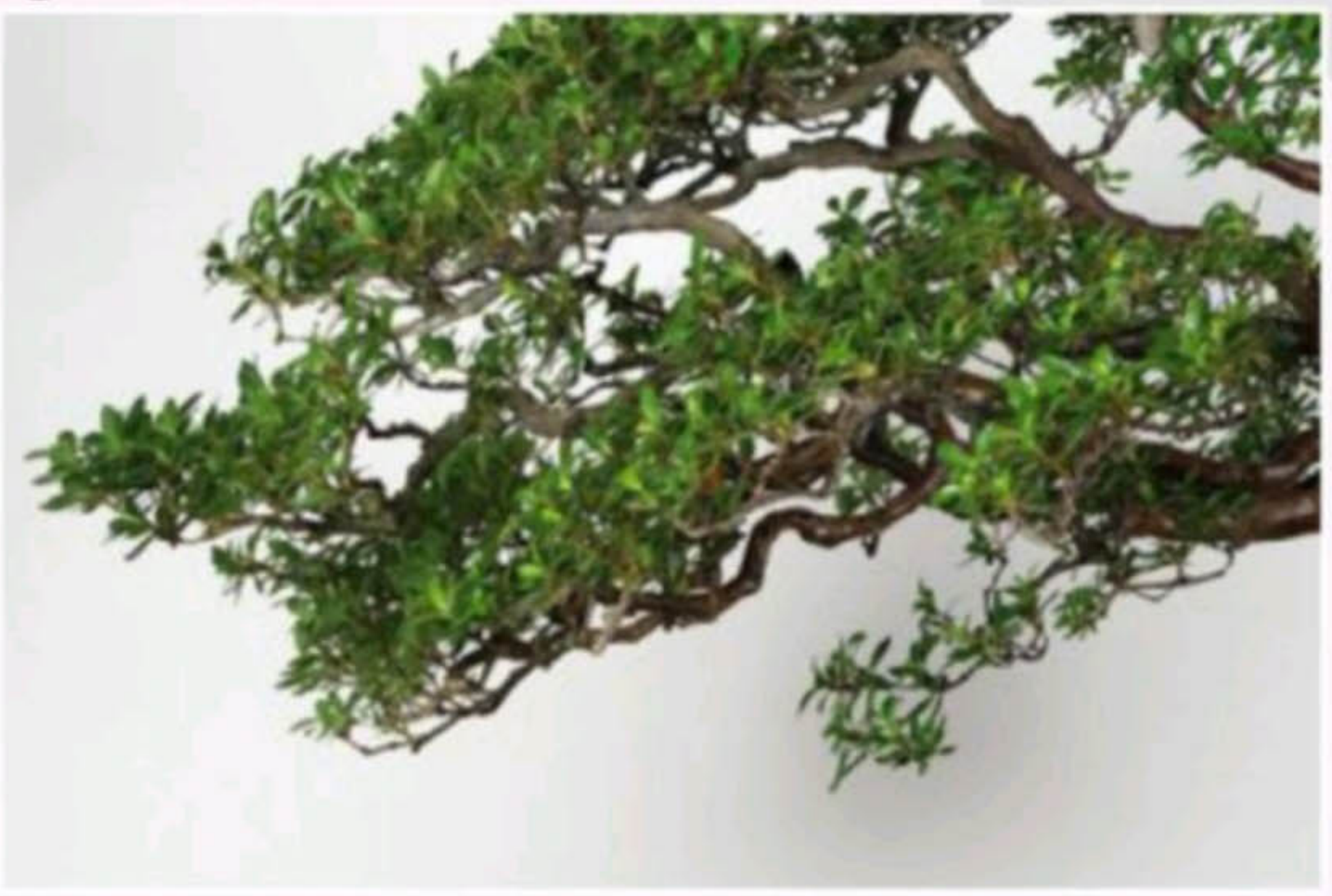
These were to be treated as jin, a technique commonly used for this variety, as it often experiences natural die-back

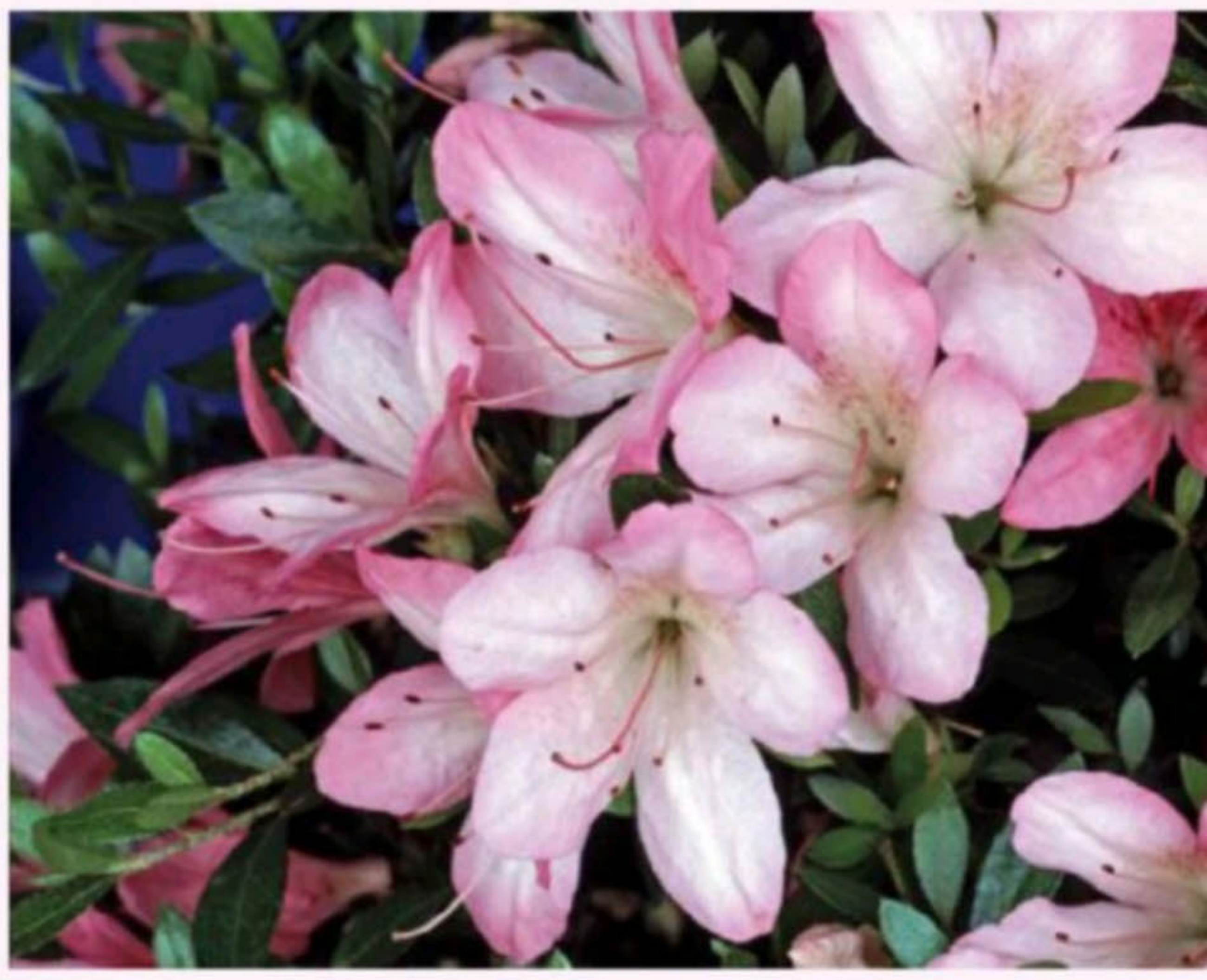
A front view of the tree after working the jins and branch thinning. The tree has become significantly lighter in appearance



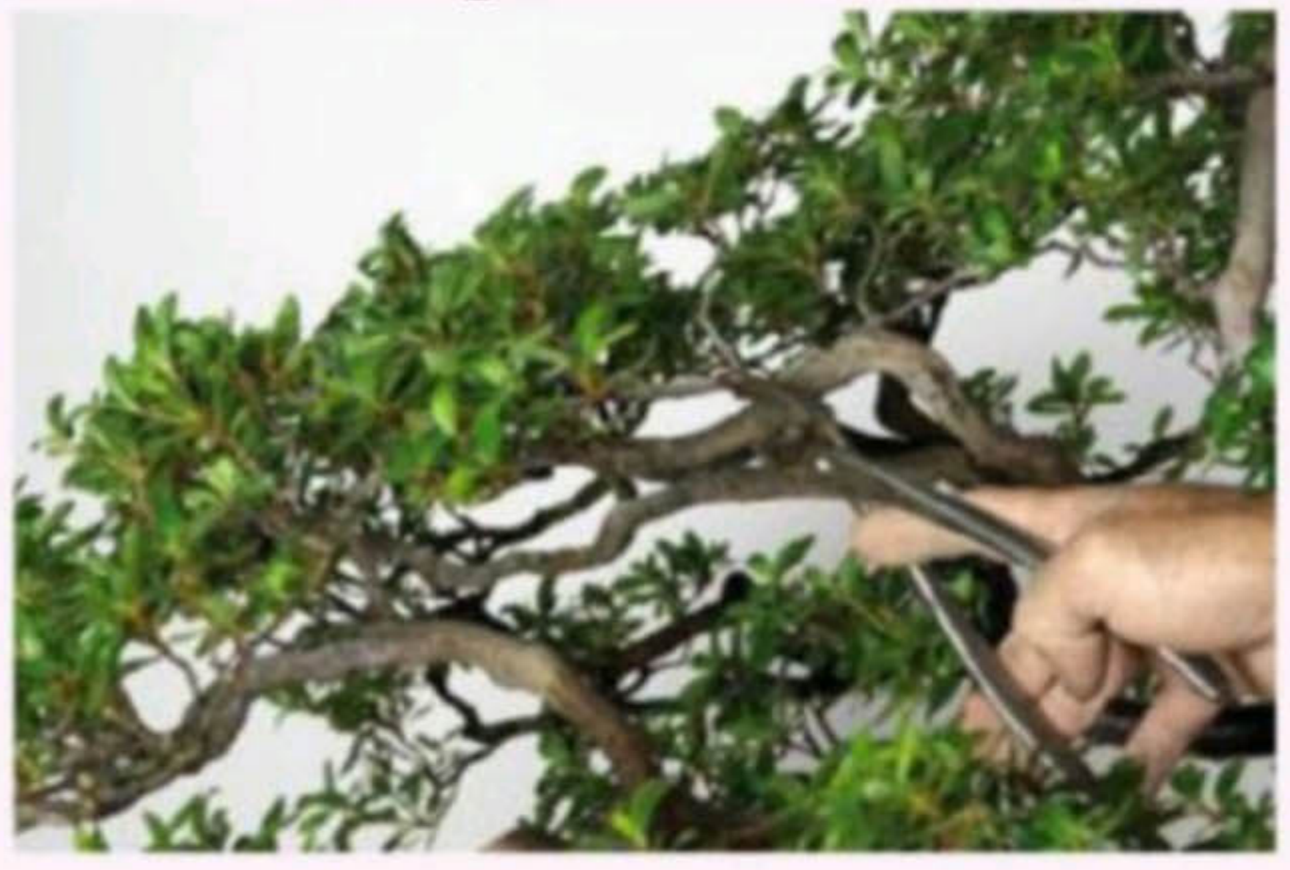
Two key areas after branch thinning

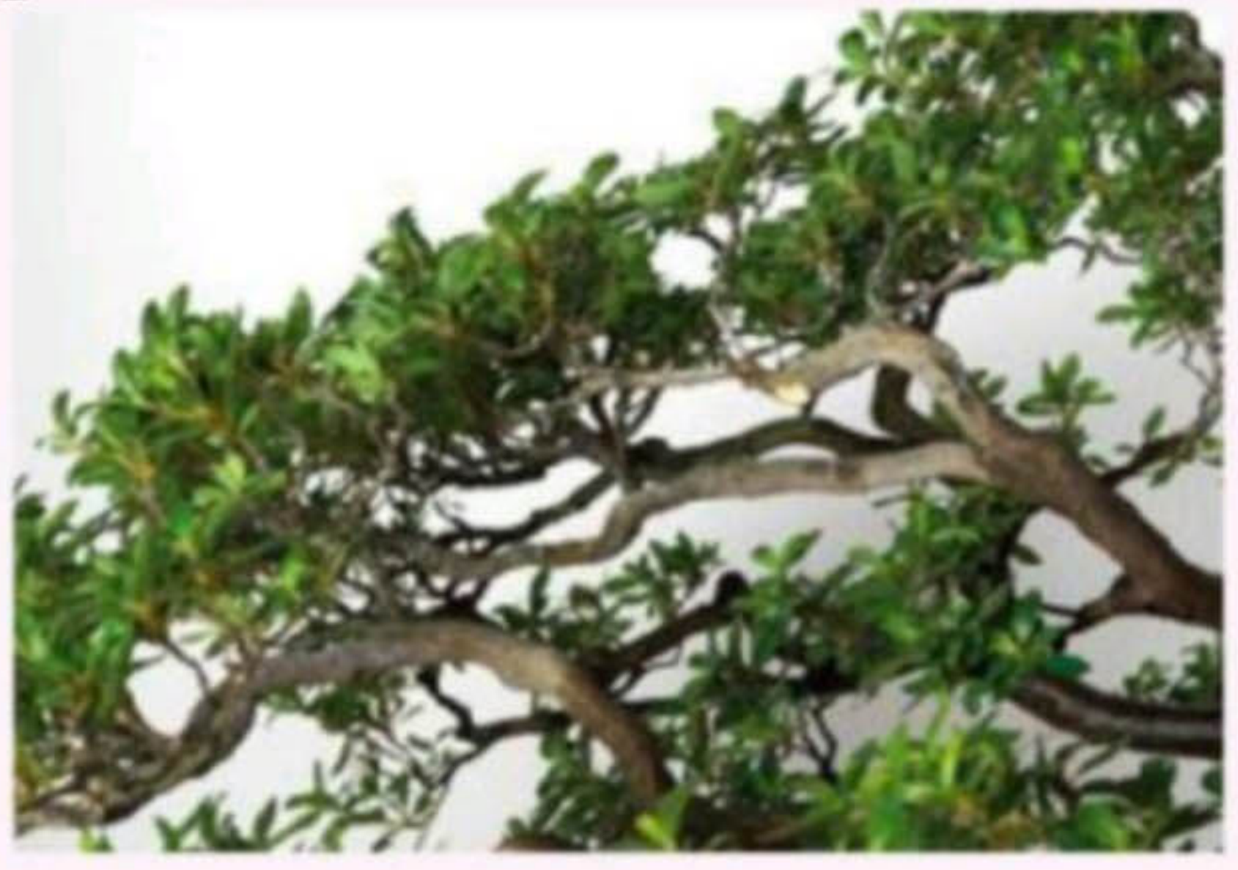

The apex after branch thinning. While there were still some branches that could be further thinned out, the main structure was already visible through the branches


The left-hand branches after thinning out

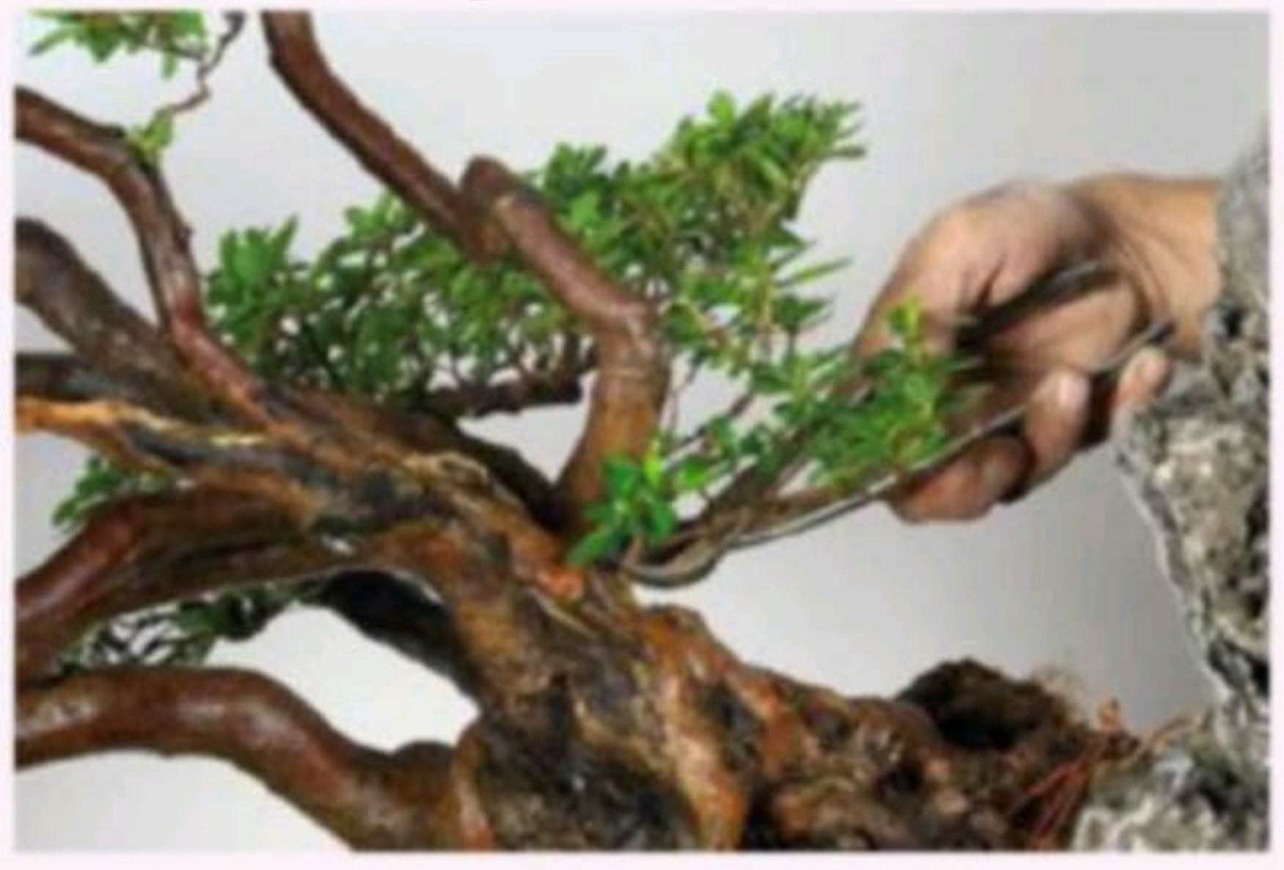


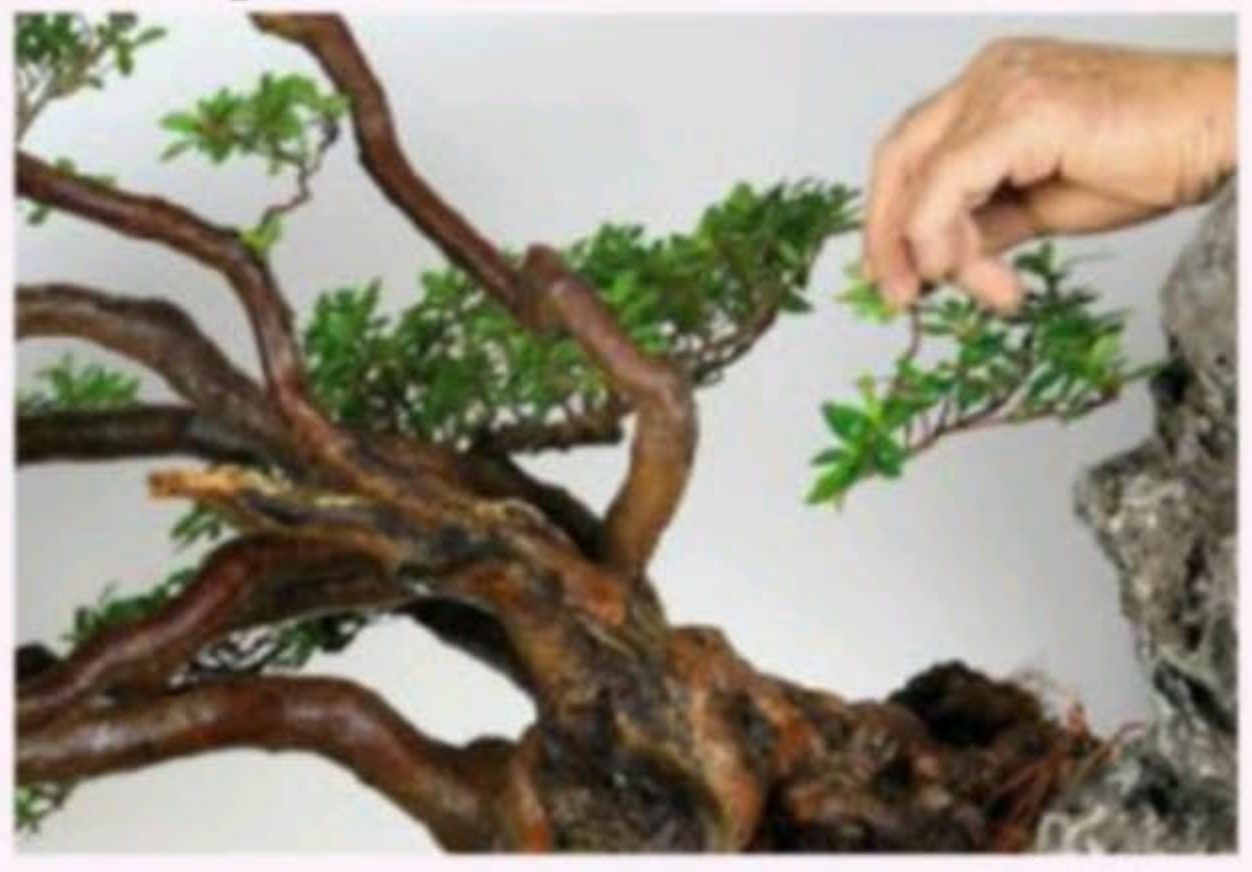
Removing the overlapping branches and trunks


The overlap of the trunk and thick branches was disrupting the natural leftward flow


By shortening the trunk and branches, the leftward movement became more pronounced

Removing branches that disrupted the flow


Next Osamu removed a branch that had been growing from the base of the right trunk towards the right

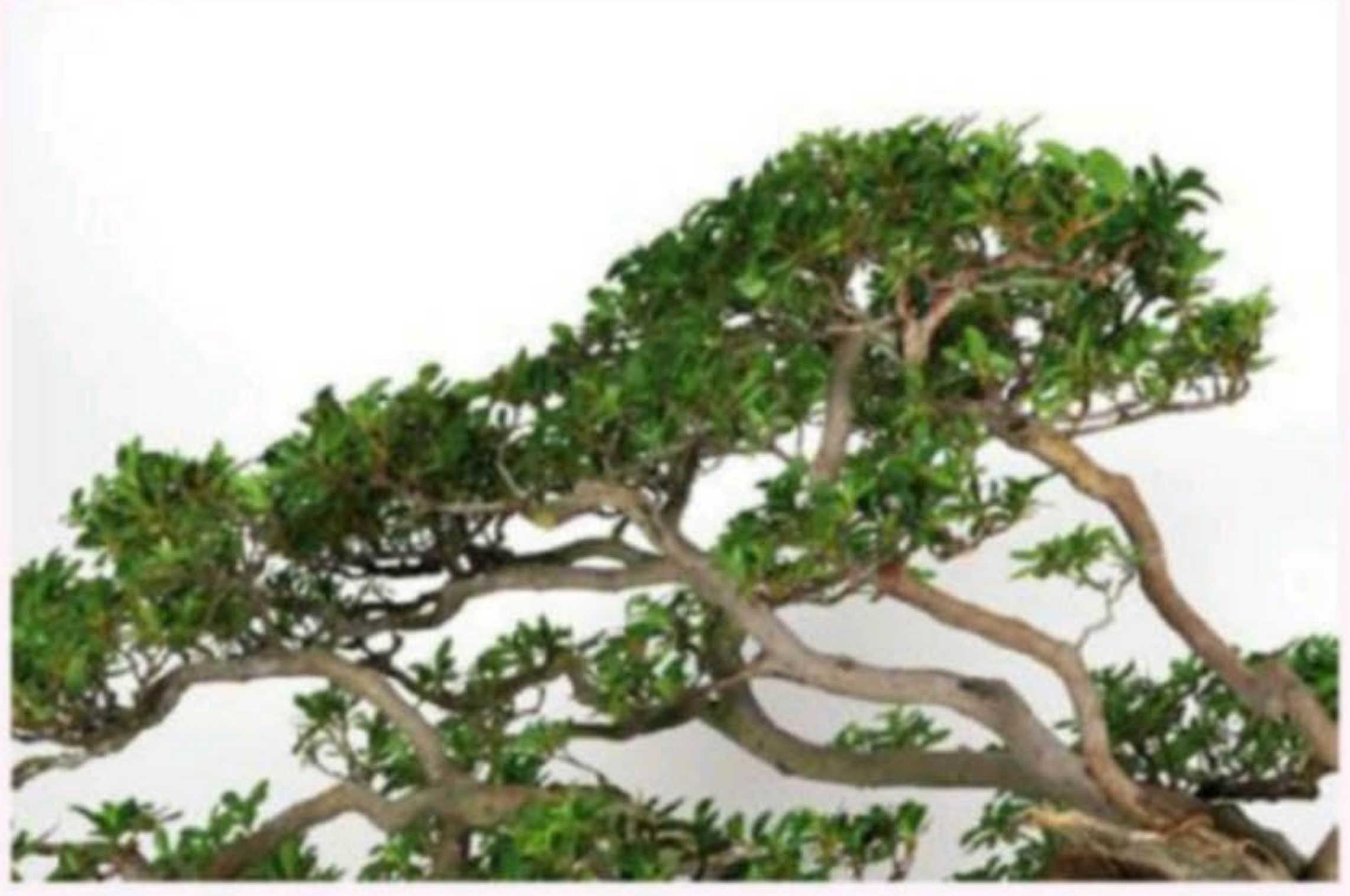

With this adjustment, the right trunk's flow became more visible, while the overall structure appeared more refined

Osamu applied wire only to the necessary branches

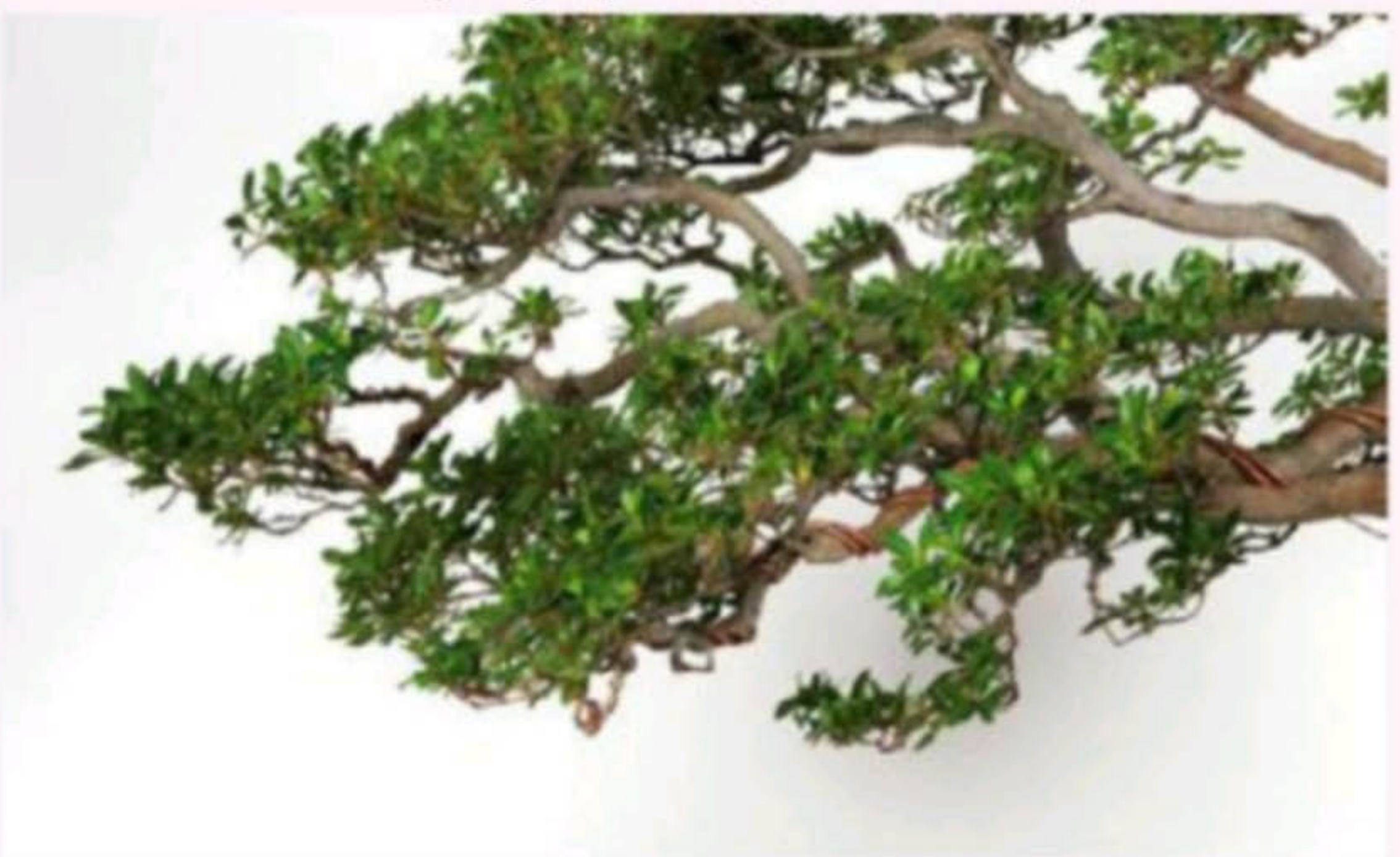
Partial wiring on some branches

Osamu initially stated that he would not apply any wire on this tree, his intention was to preserve the natural aesthetic achieved through careful pruning. However, as the angle was adjusted and the tree was attached to the stone, it was clear that some branches required minimal wiring for support. Eventually, he picked up the wire, saying, 'Would it be all right if I applied just a little?'

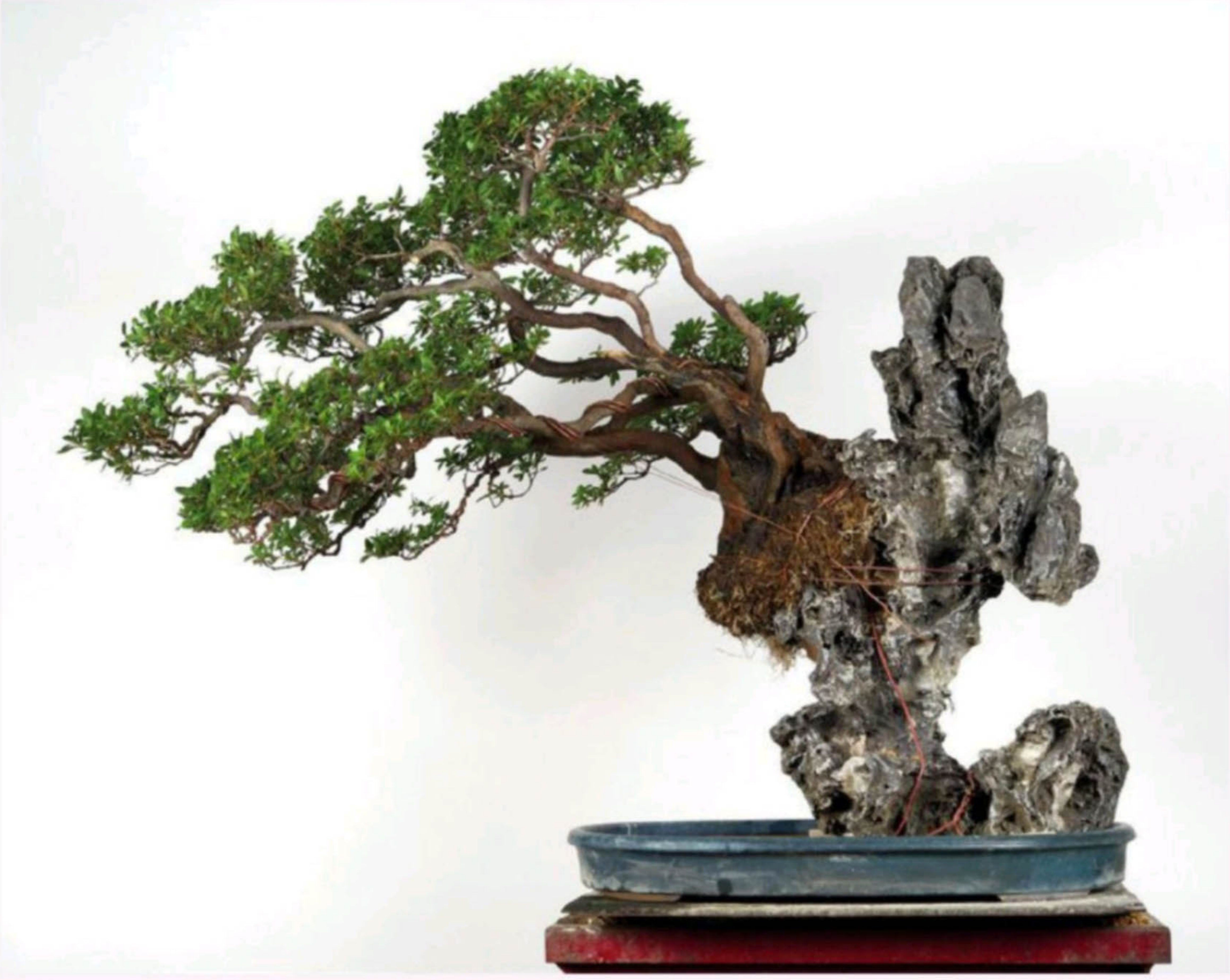
The main character branch is wired and pulled down initially


The apex after wiring. A branch on the right, which had previously disrupted the flow, was now in a downward position

The lower left branch, which had been pulled down at the base, was slightly lifted again at its tip



The front after wiring adjustments. The overall balance between the stone and the branch volume has been improved, further emphasizing the leftward flow.



Application of Keto, a companion plant, and moss

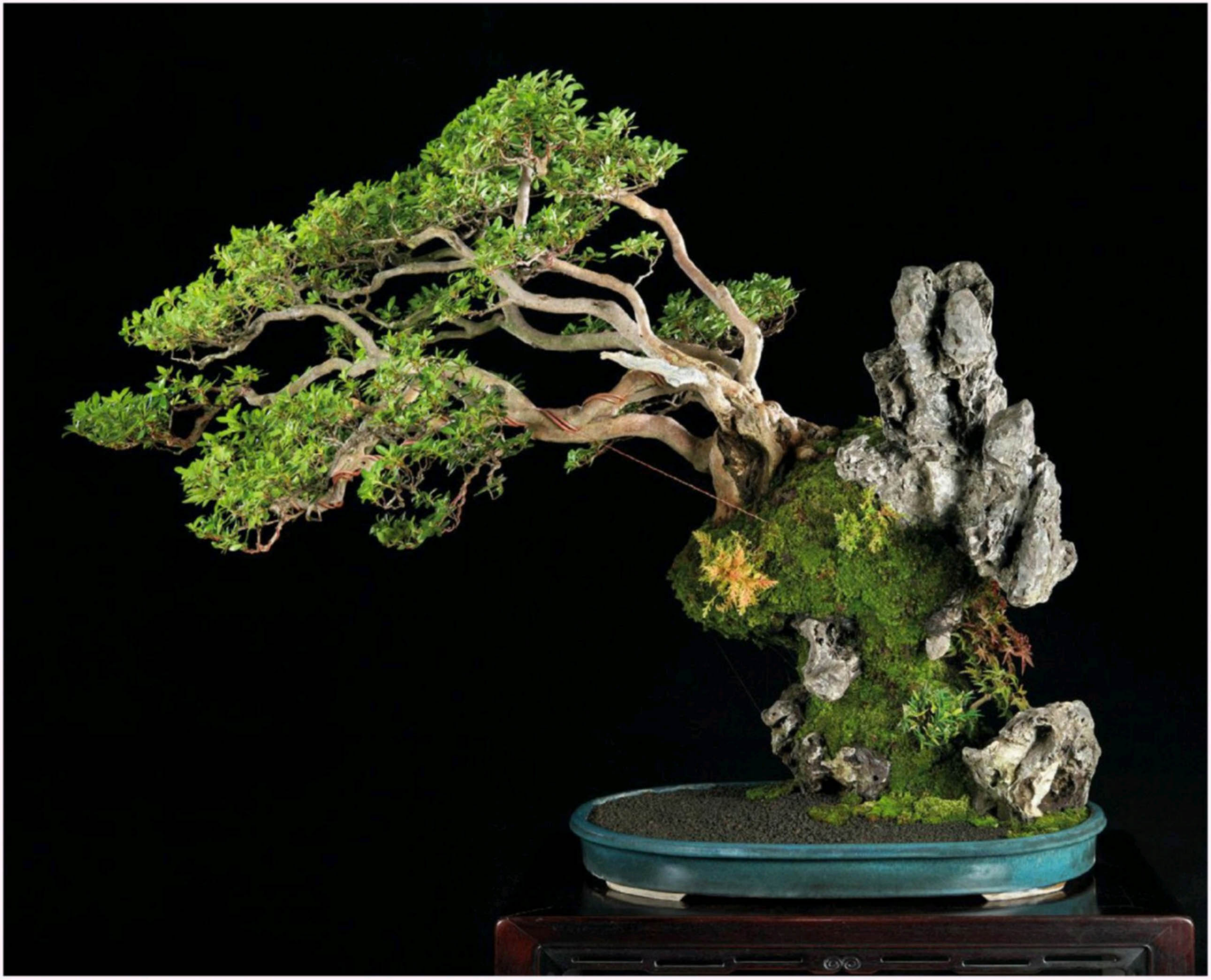
The placement of the companion plants was carefully considered

Keto soil was applied to areas designated for companion plants and to conceal unwanted areas

The accent plants were then positioned and decorative moss was applied

Once soil was added to the pot, a final layer of Keto soil was spread over the surface

The landscape achieved through stone planting is something that cannot be expressed with a typical bonsai in a pot. This is the unique appeal of rock plantings. In autumn, this elegant tree will display beautiful foliage and, as the Kogane Shida (Golden Fern) and Momiji (Japanese maple) change colour. it will evoke the scenery of a mountain in autumn — another enjoyable aspect of stone planting.


Final front view after the work is completed.
Height: 86 cm Width: 120 cm Pot: Japanese oval

ALL ABOUT THE ROOTS

Learning how to deal with roots using practical examples

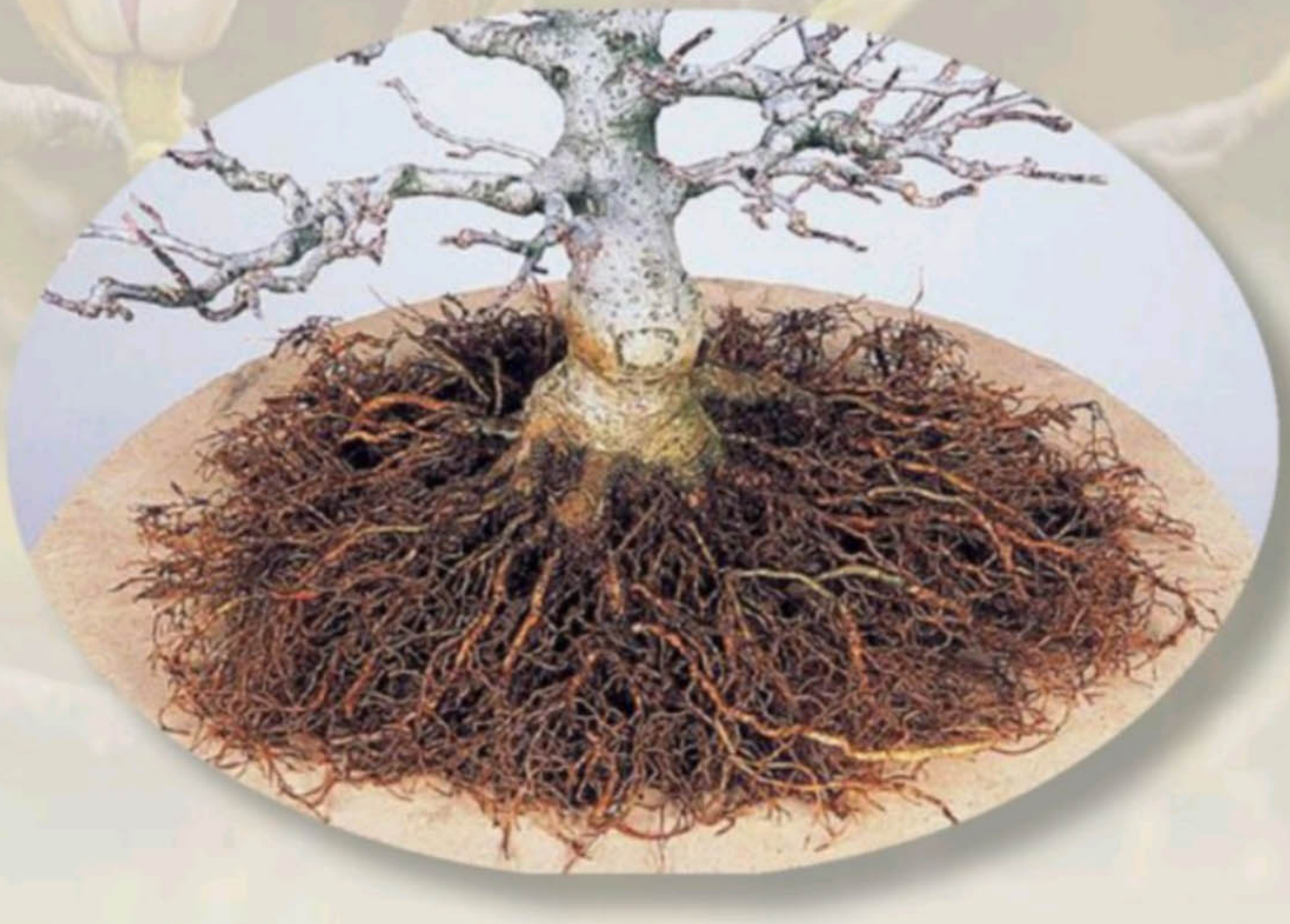
Text and photography: Kinbon, Japan

How to carry out a proper root treatment in order to eliminate the differences in root strength and create an even better-looking nebari. Let us follow some example trees and see what can be improved

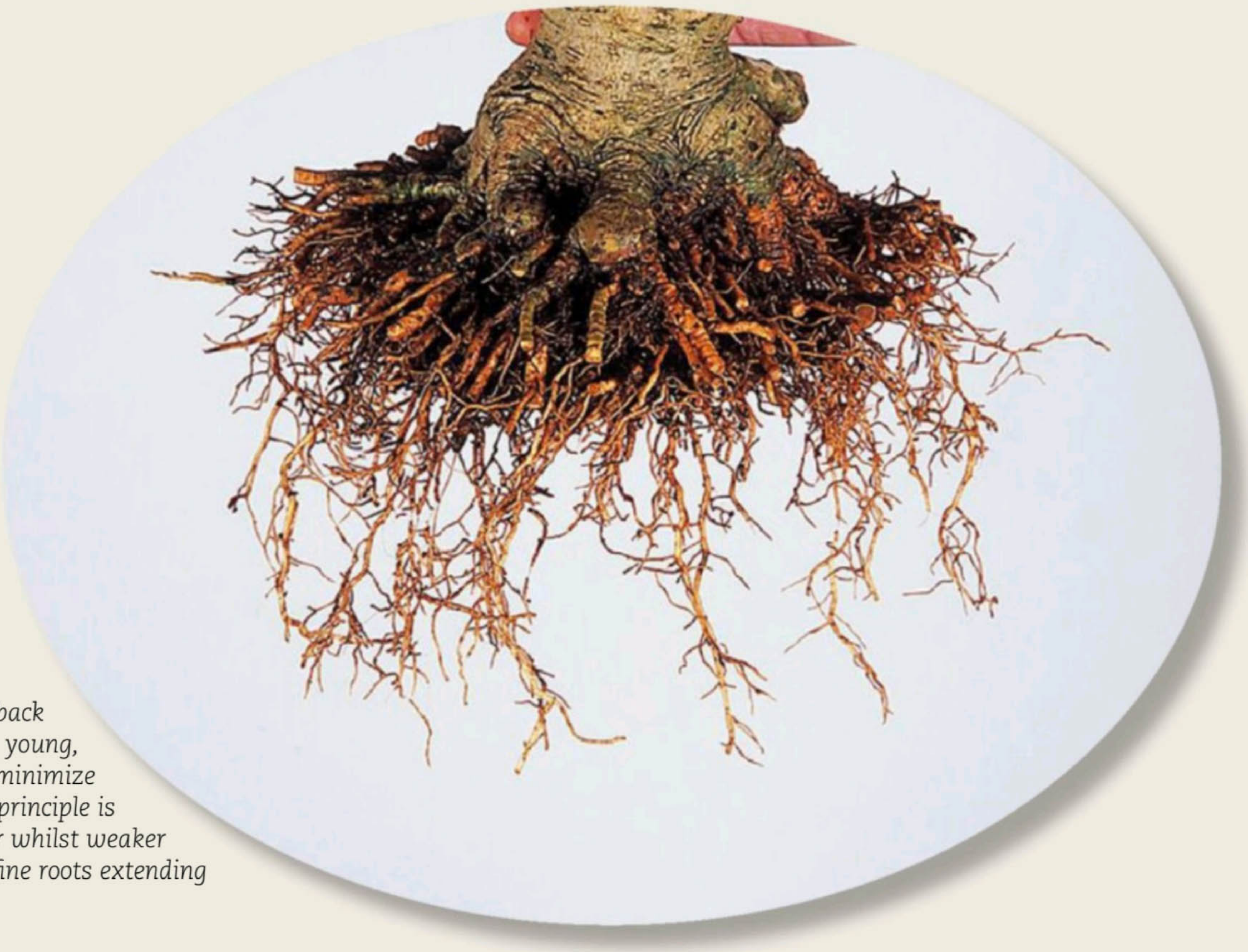
Hime Kobushi, *dwarf magnolia*

Balancing the difference in root strength

This example involves repotting a dwarf magnolia. It's had some basic shaping and is now ready for the next stage of branch refinement. The root ball has been broken down slightly and the long roots have been roughly trimmed. While the previous repottings helped organize the roots, giving the appearance of evenly distributed fine roots, a closer look reveals that many thick and strong roots remain. If planted in this condition, the difference in root strength will continue to increase, negatively affecting branch development. Since magnolia tends to develop thick roots aggressively, it is vital to hold back the dominant roots while encouraging the growth of finer roots.



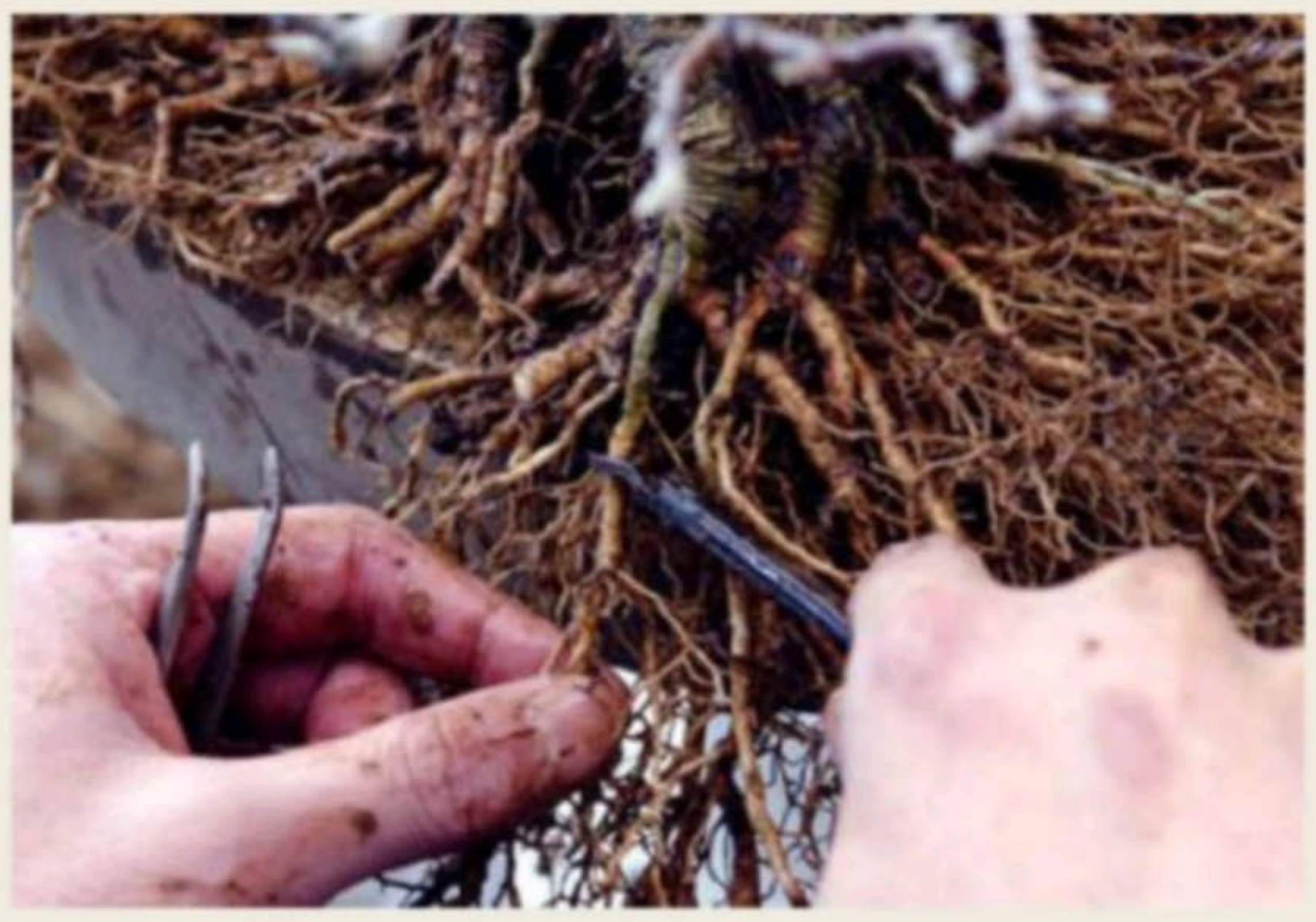
A dwarf magnolia ready for the next step



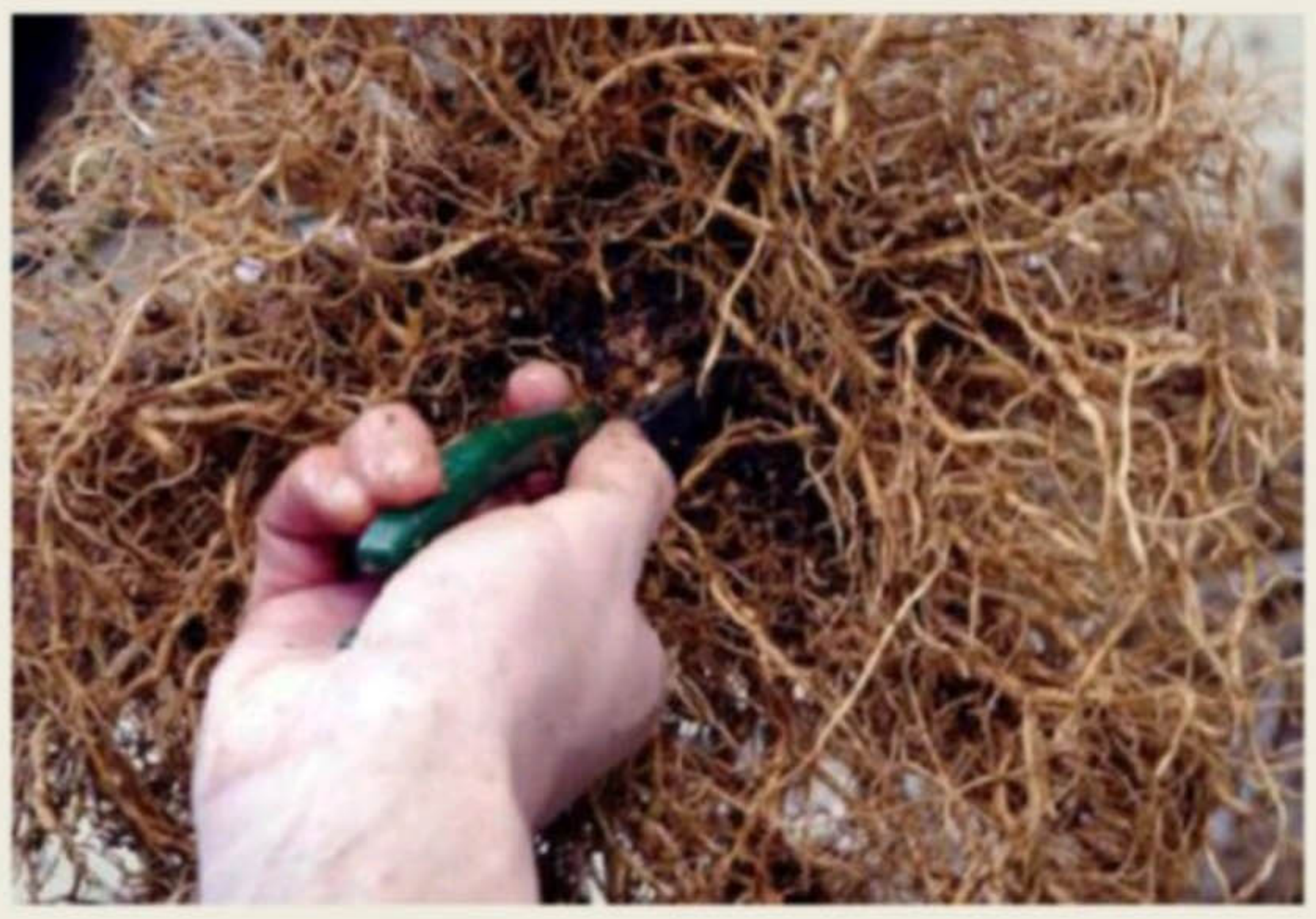
After dealing with surface roots. When working on the roots, the presence of many thick roots near the base is confirmed. To control their dominance, they are trimmed back at points where smaller roots split off. As this tree is still young, a bold approach to root pruning was taken. However, to minimize stress on the tree, fine roots were left longer. The general principle is similar to branch development, thick roots are cut shorter whilst weaker roots are left longer to balance overall strength. Finally, fine roots extending downwards are pruned back to complete the root work

Examples of cutting back thick roots

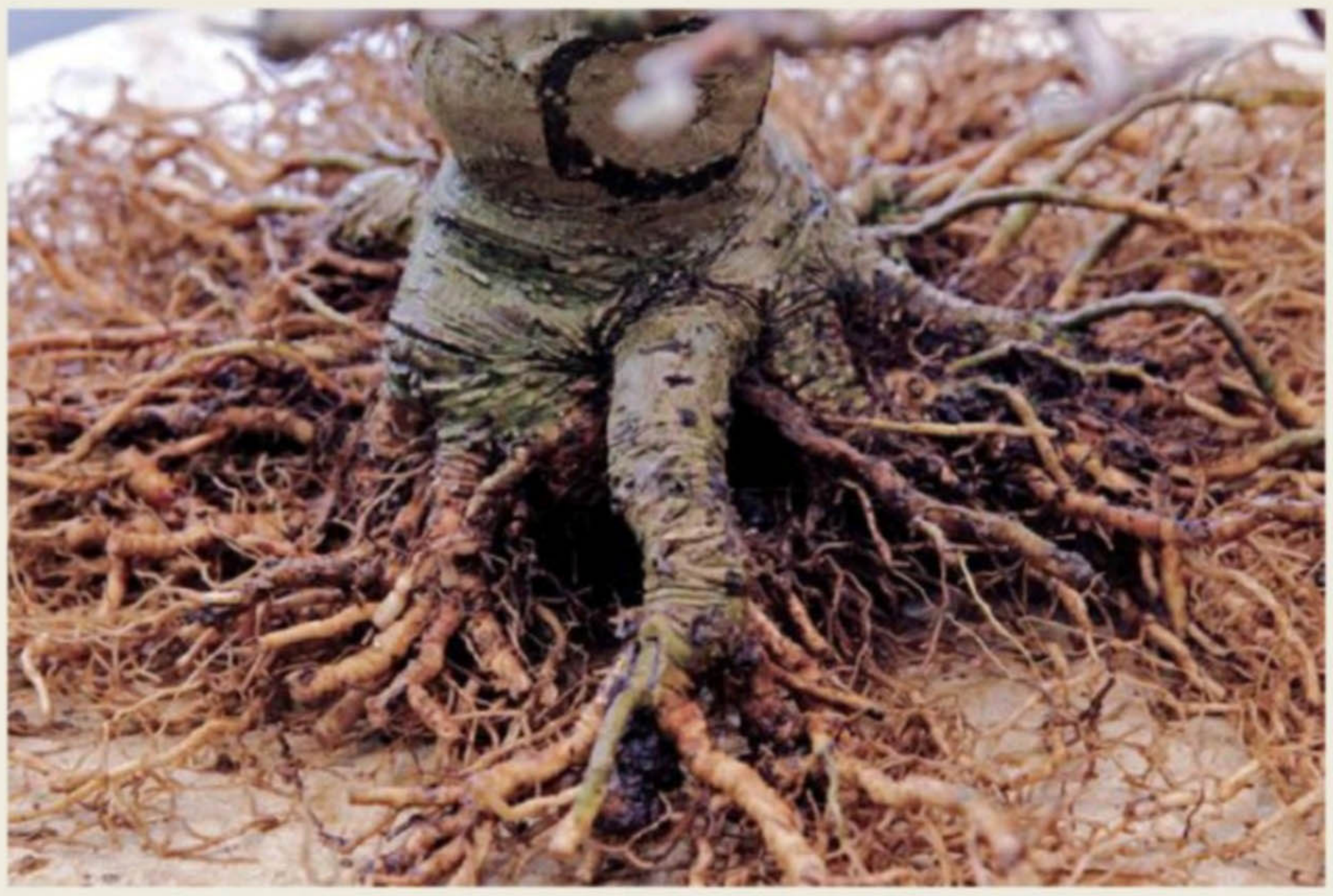
Soil is carefully removed, and the roots thoroughly washed to remove all remaining dirt



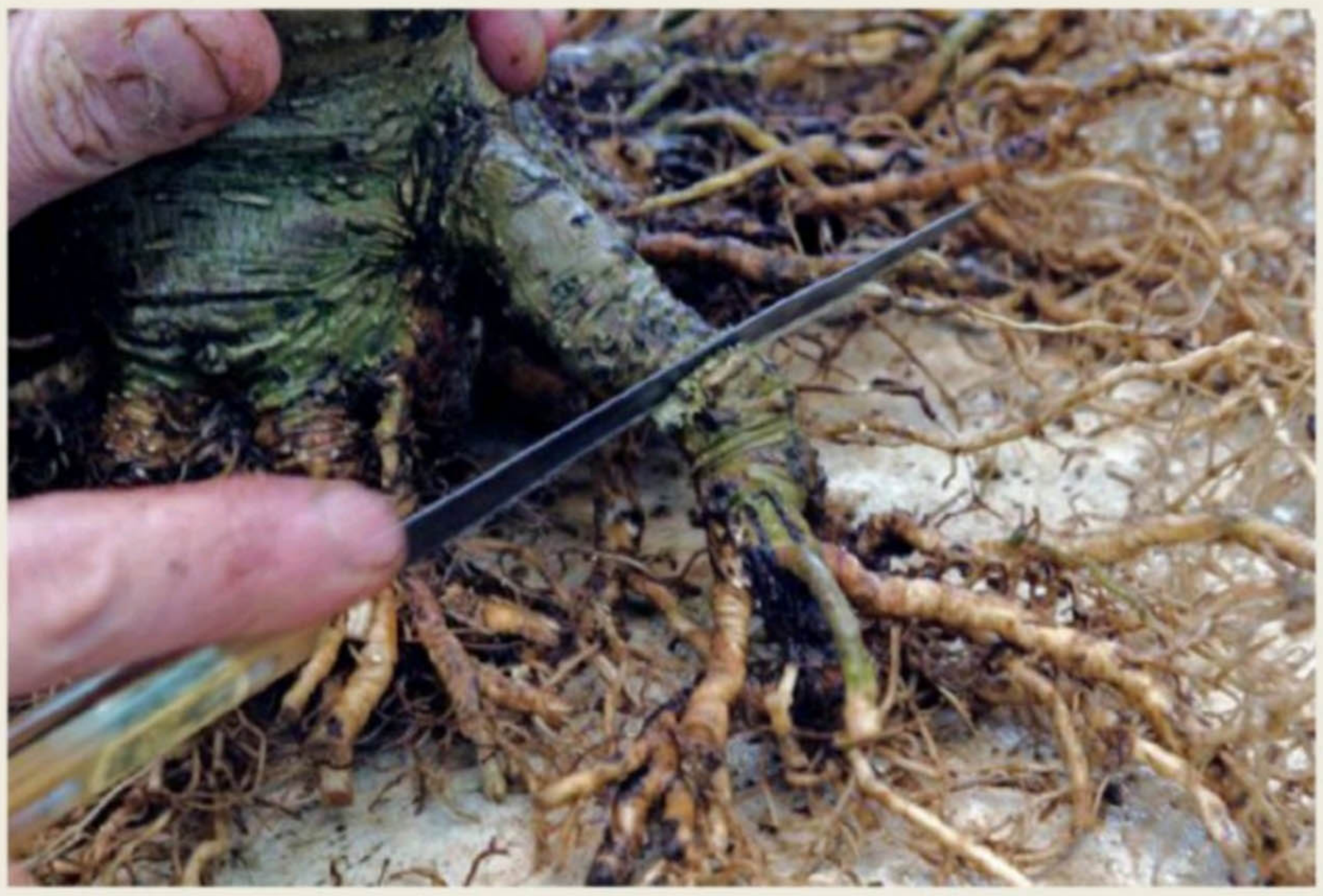
Any root that appears too dominant is identified and trimmed back at a point where smaller roots branch off to suppress the strong areas



A thick downward-growing root was found and cut back at its base

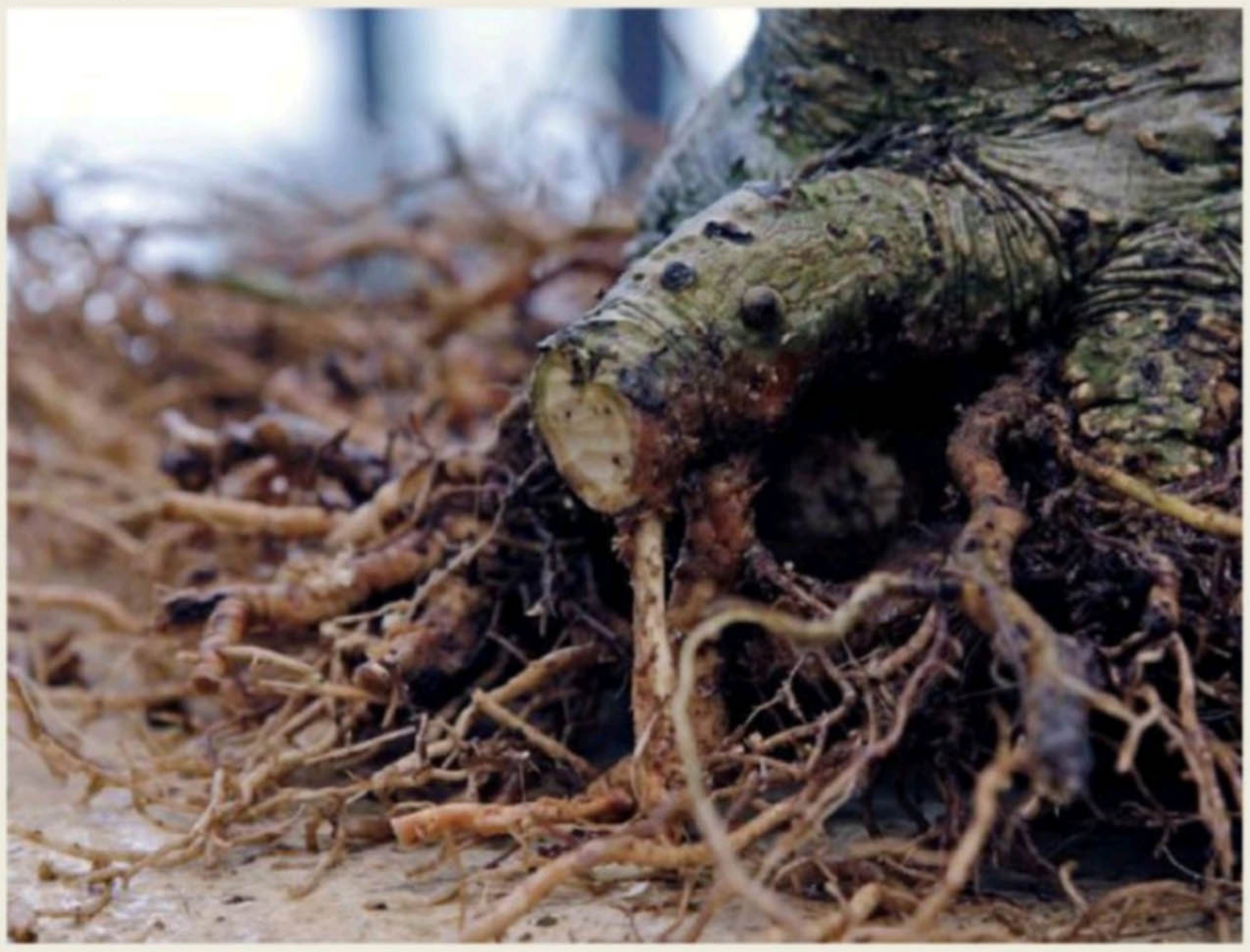


A particularly strong root was identified. Leaving it untouched while still active would allow it to grow even stronger

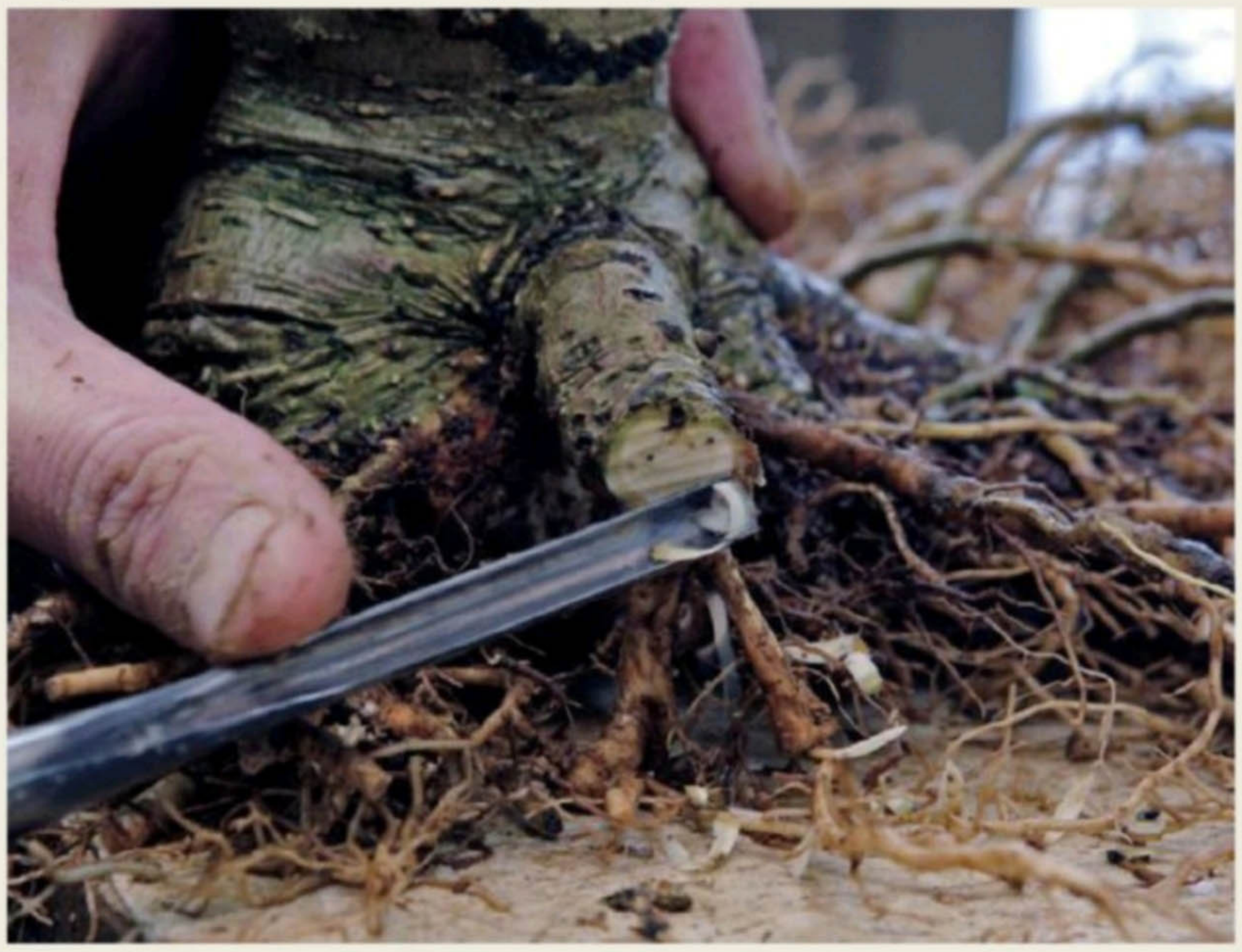


Since the overall root mass was dense and viable smaller roots were available, the thick root was cut back at the branching point

A close-up after cutting. The smaller roots that will now take over can be seen growing downwards



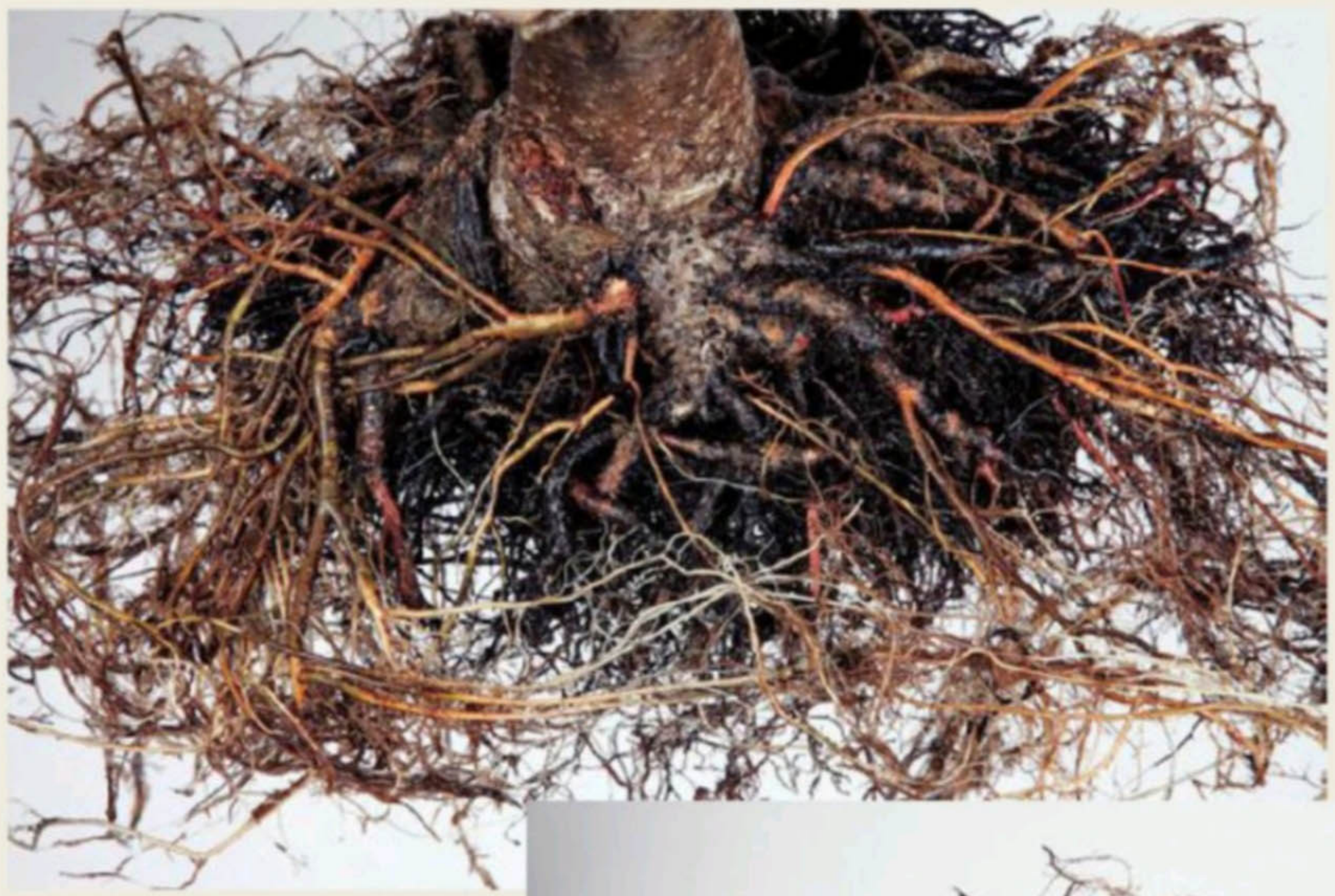
If the cut section is likely to become exposed above the soil, the wound should be shaped and sealed with a healing agent to promote smooth recovery

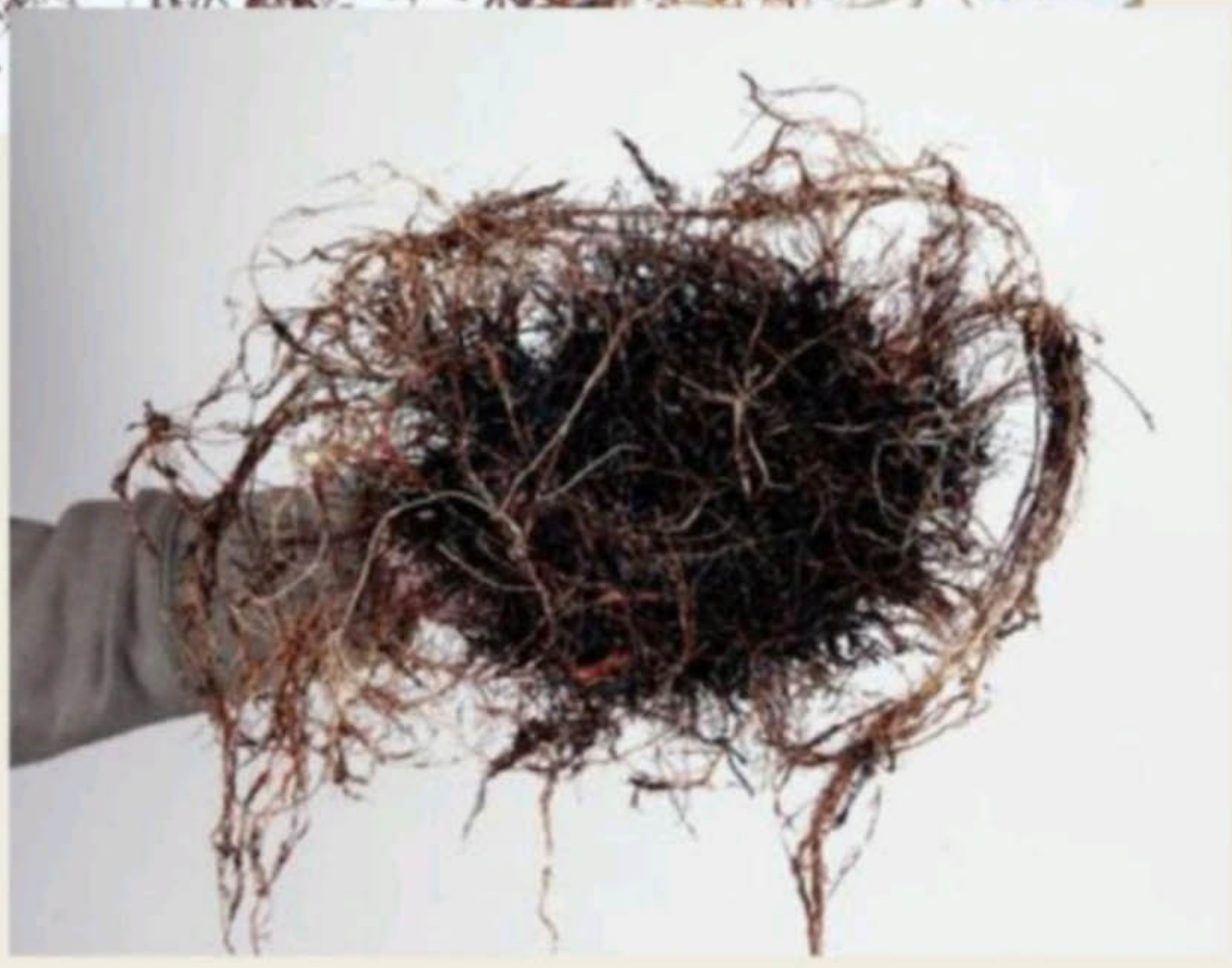


Keyaki (Japanese *Zelkova serrata*)

Dealing with root rot caused by drought

This example involves repotting an old *Zelkova* that has plenty of mochi-komi character. After breaking down the root ball a little and then washing the roots, it became clear that the core of the root structure had turned black due to root rot. The tree was surviving solely on the few remaining upper roots. Fortunately, these upper roots were very healthy, with several thick, well-developed roots present. Since leaving the rotted roots could negatively impact on the tree's vitality, all affected parts were removed before the remaining roots were reorganized.



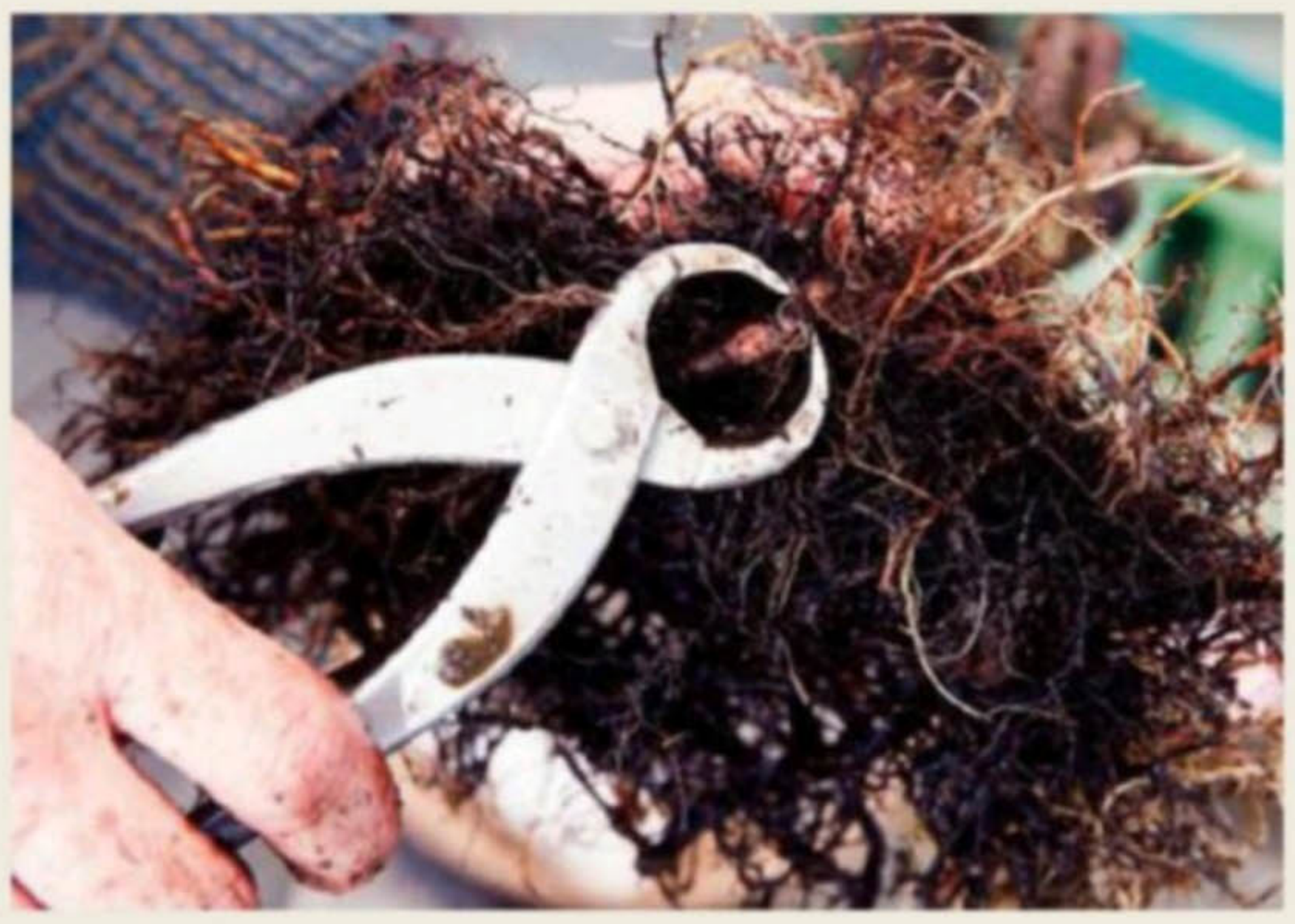


Viewing the tree from the beneath, no fine roots were found in the decayed area. The long, circling roots seen around it all originated from the upper roots near the base

The rotted roots on the bottom were cut off entirely from their base

Cutting off the rotted roots from their base

The dead fine roots were carefully trimmed away, revealing the condition of the bottom surface



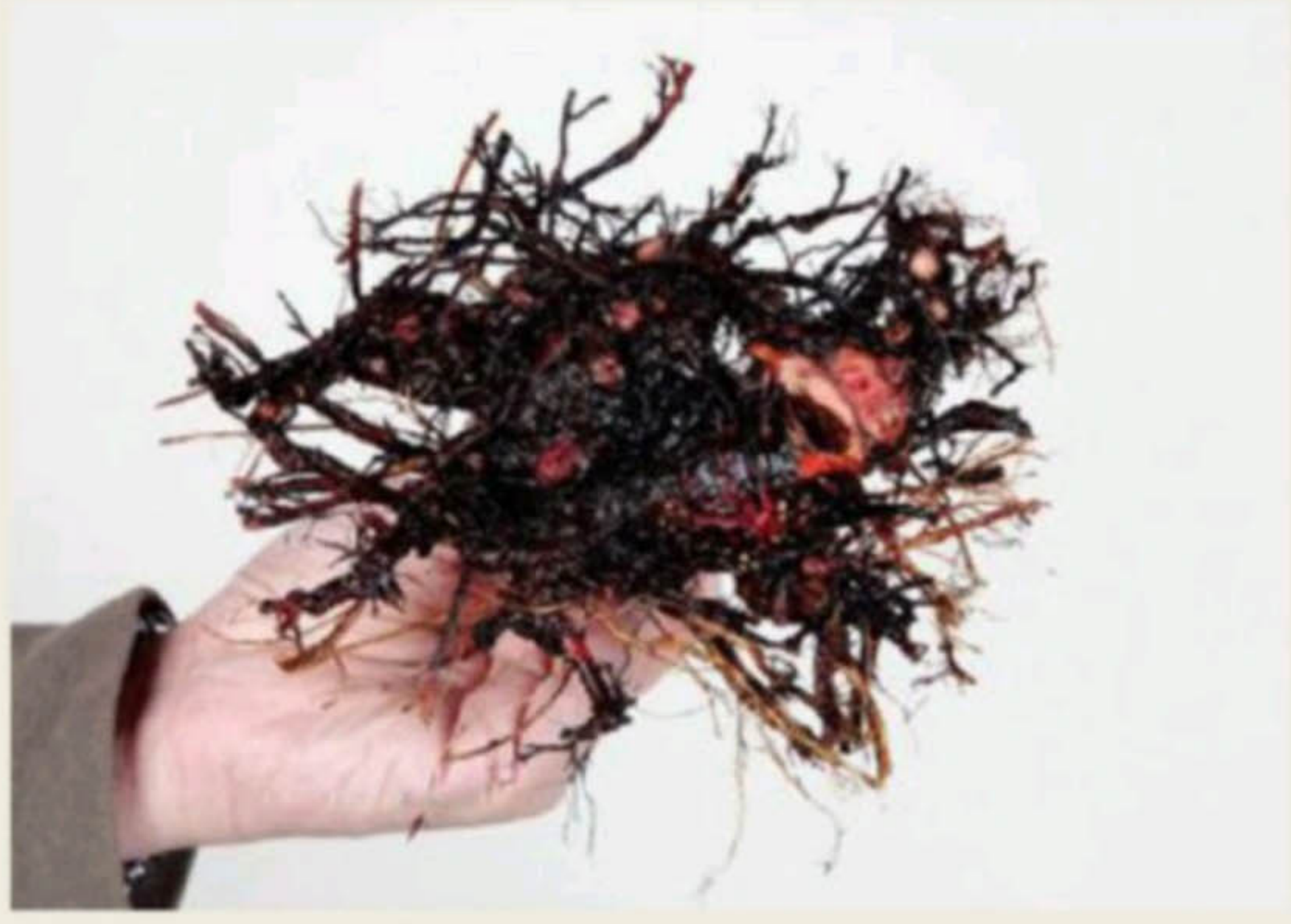
A thick root was found remaining at the base. Since it appeared dead, this was also cut off

Dealing with the remaining living roots

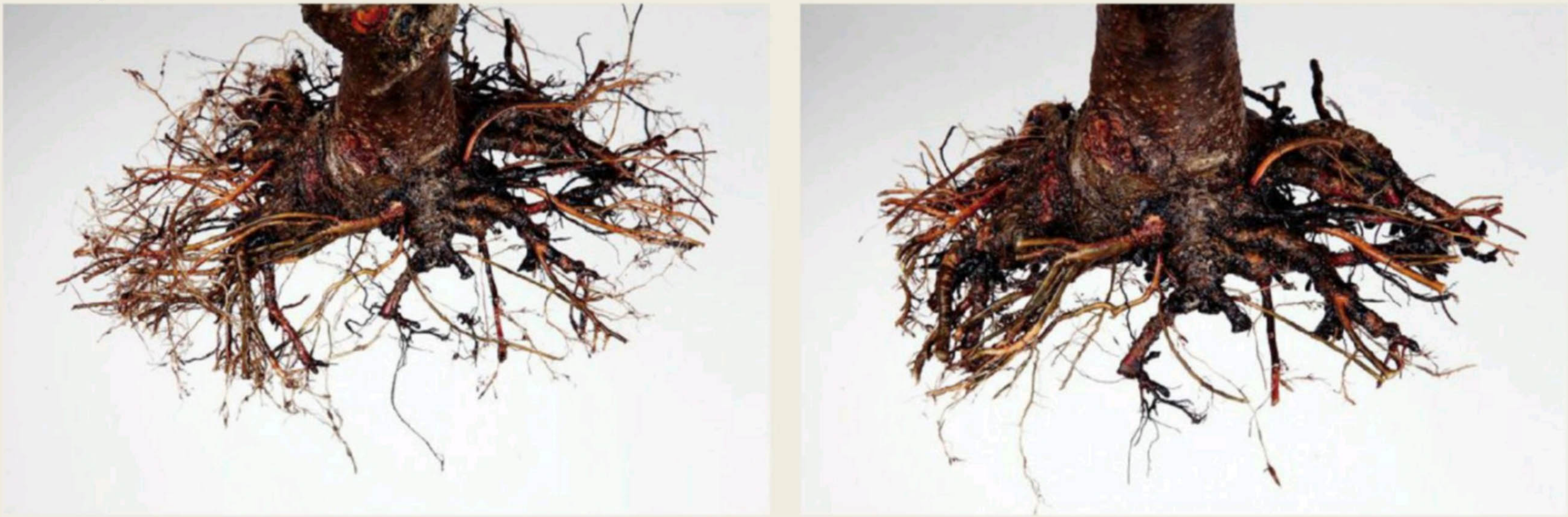
There were only a few living roots, but the overly vigorous ones were pruned at their tips to suppress excessive growth

A thick root growing in an undesirable direction was found. Ideally, this root should be removed as soon as possible, but considering the limited number of healthy roots, only its tip was cut for now

Viewed from the beneath after working on the roots, no healthy roots remained in the previously rotted area



A comparison of the tree before and after root treatment

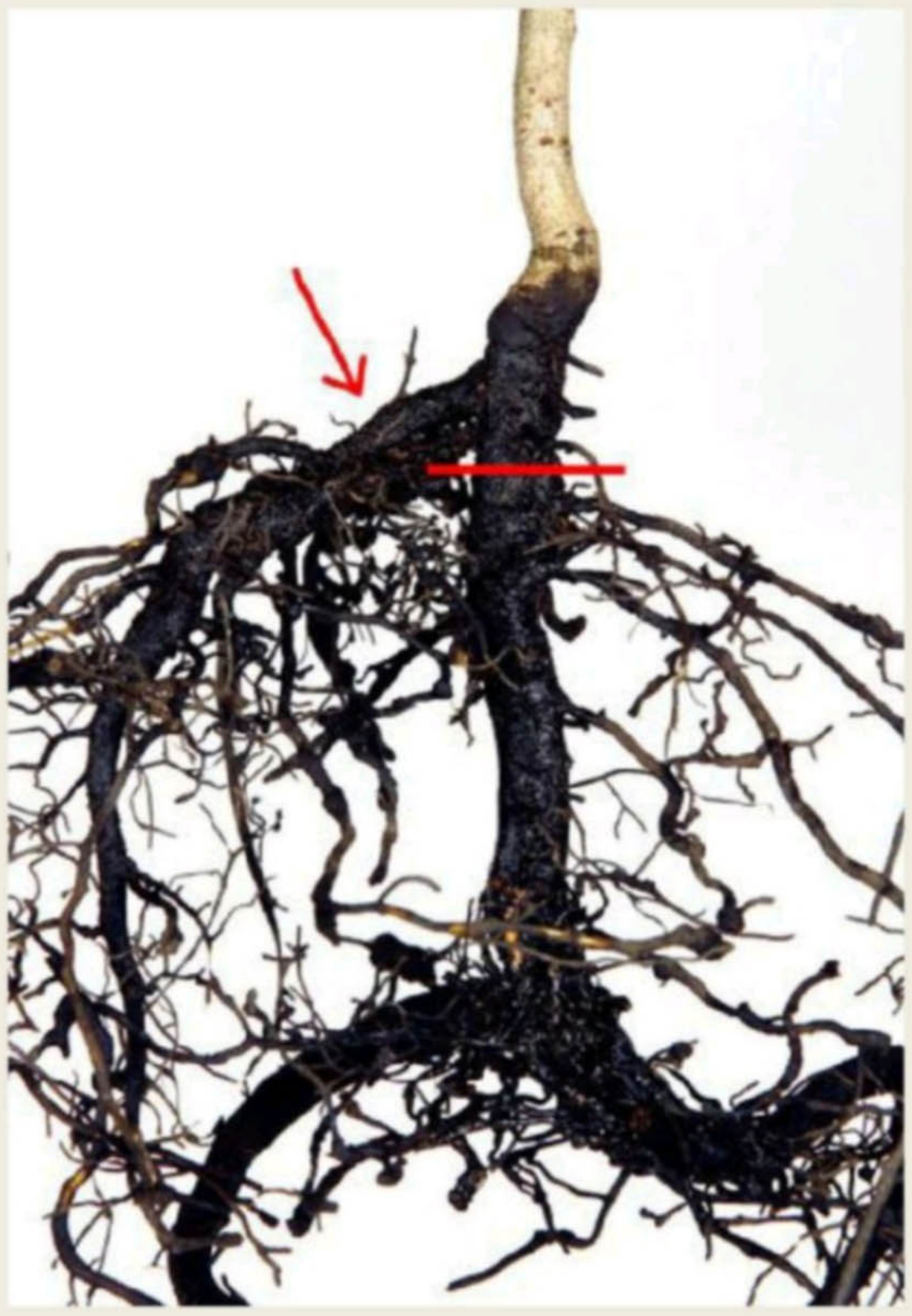


.Although few roots remained, if the specially vigorous roots were to be left unpruned, they would continue growing unchecked, preventing the development of finer roots. Aggressive root pruning could risk killing the tree, so roots were pruned back only to the branching points. This approach helped suppress dominant roots while encouraging finer root growth

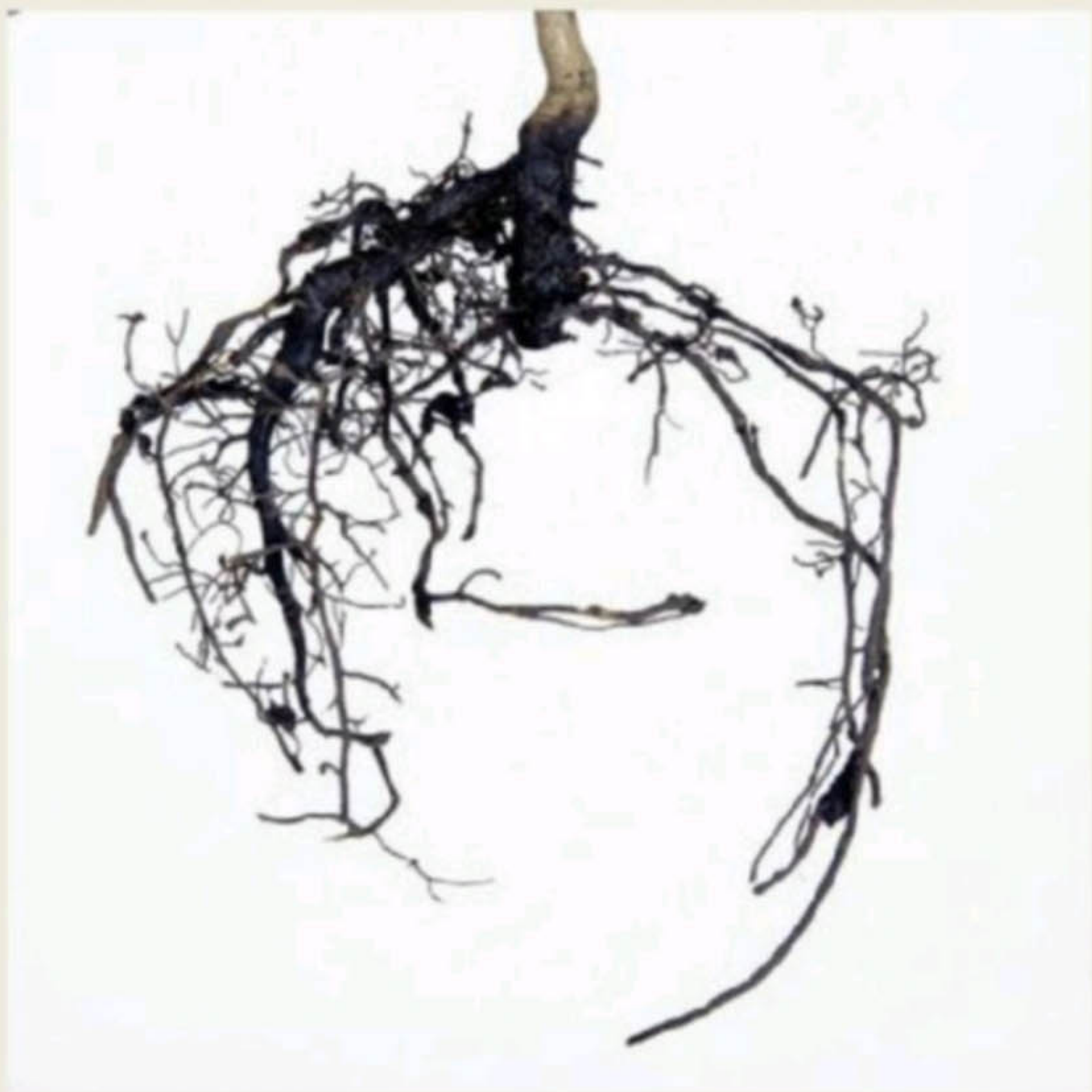
Princess persimmon, *Diospyros rhombifolia*

Dealing with the tap root on a seedling tree over two repottings

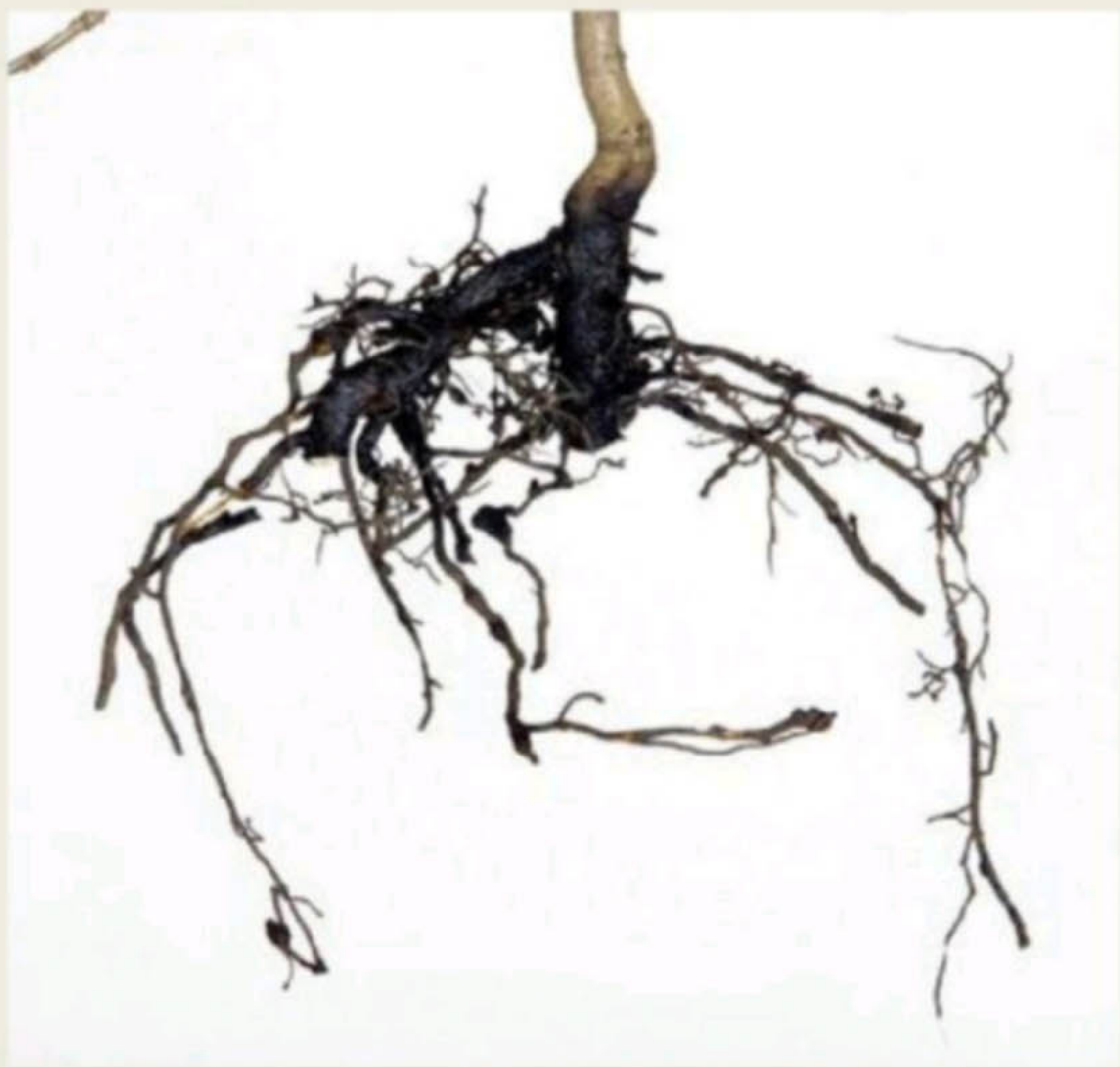
A princess persimmon seedling, about three years old, after removing the soil. As it hadn't been repotted before, a strong, thick taproot was growing straight down beneath the first root division. A number of other thick roots were also growing underneath the main taproot, resembling an extension of the trunk. In that condition, the tree could not be planted in a shallow pot, so the taproot needed to be dealt with.

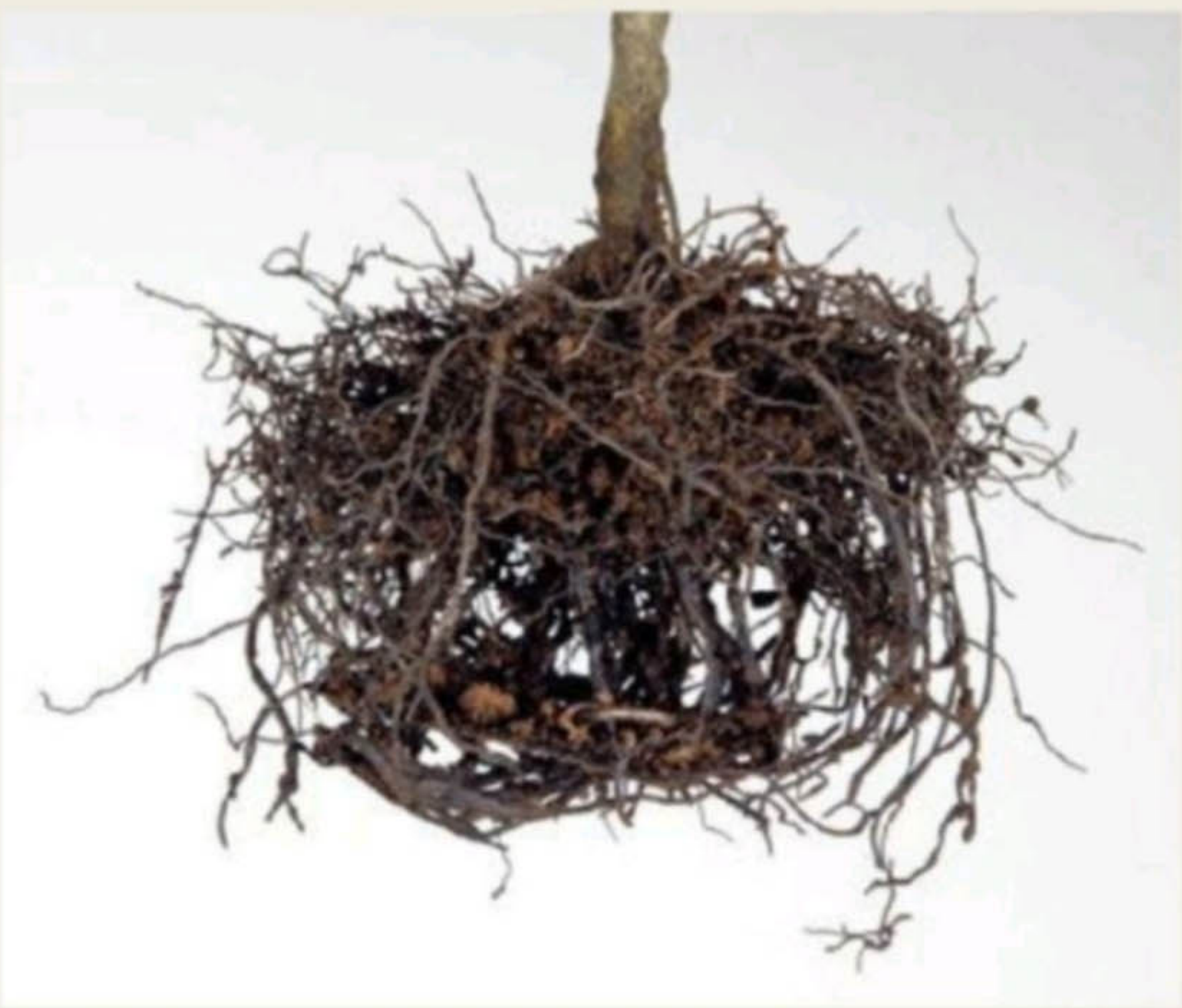


A close-up of the root. Ideally, the taproot should be cut just below the thick left-diverging root (marked with a bar), but this would reduce the overall root mass significantly and might cause the remaining left-diverging root (arrow) to become too dominant

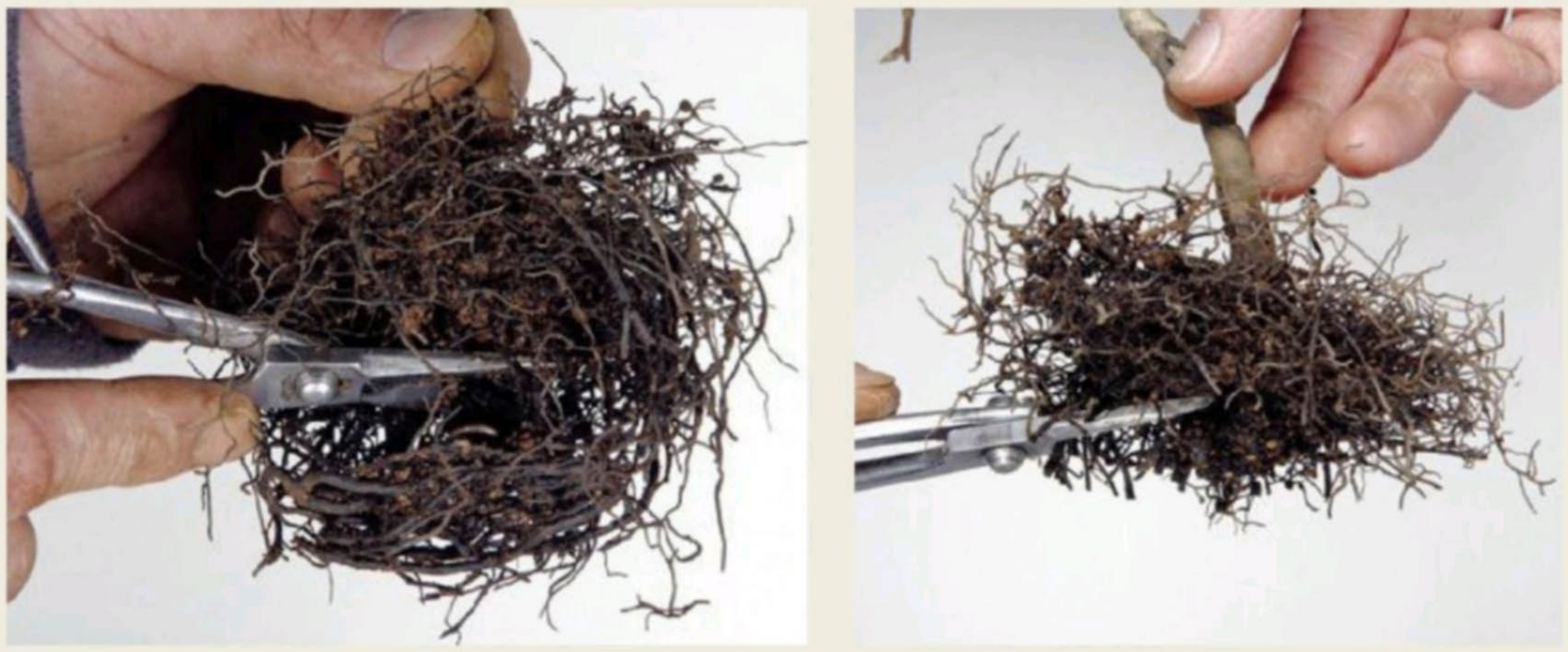


The upper image shows the taproot after an initial cut. The lower image shows the left upper root has been shortened further. The result is a two-layered root system, but leaving a portion of the taproot helps maintain root mass and reduce stress on the tree. The remaining taproot will be removed at the next repotting

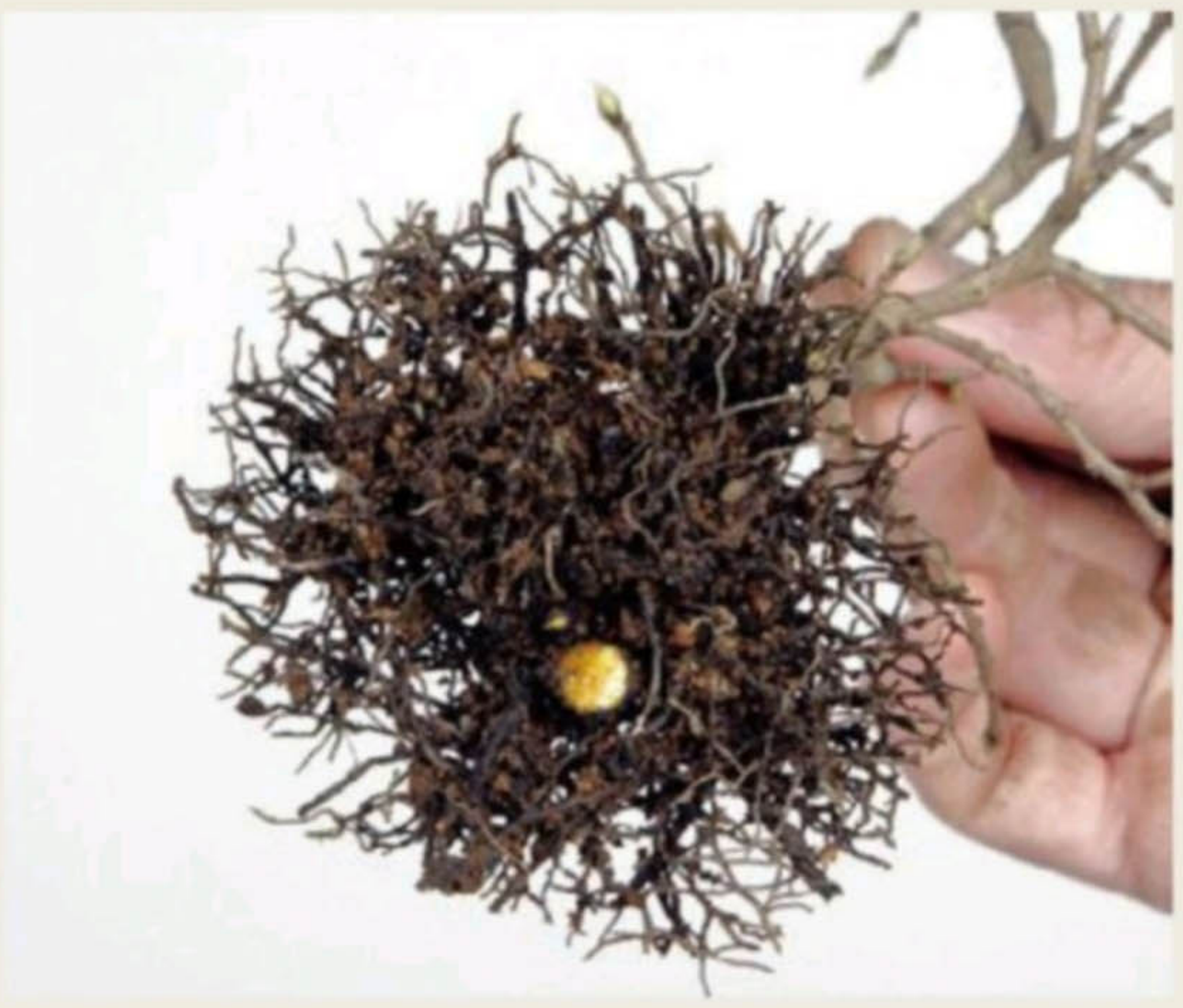




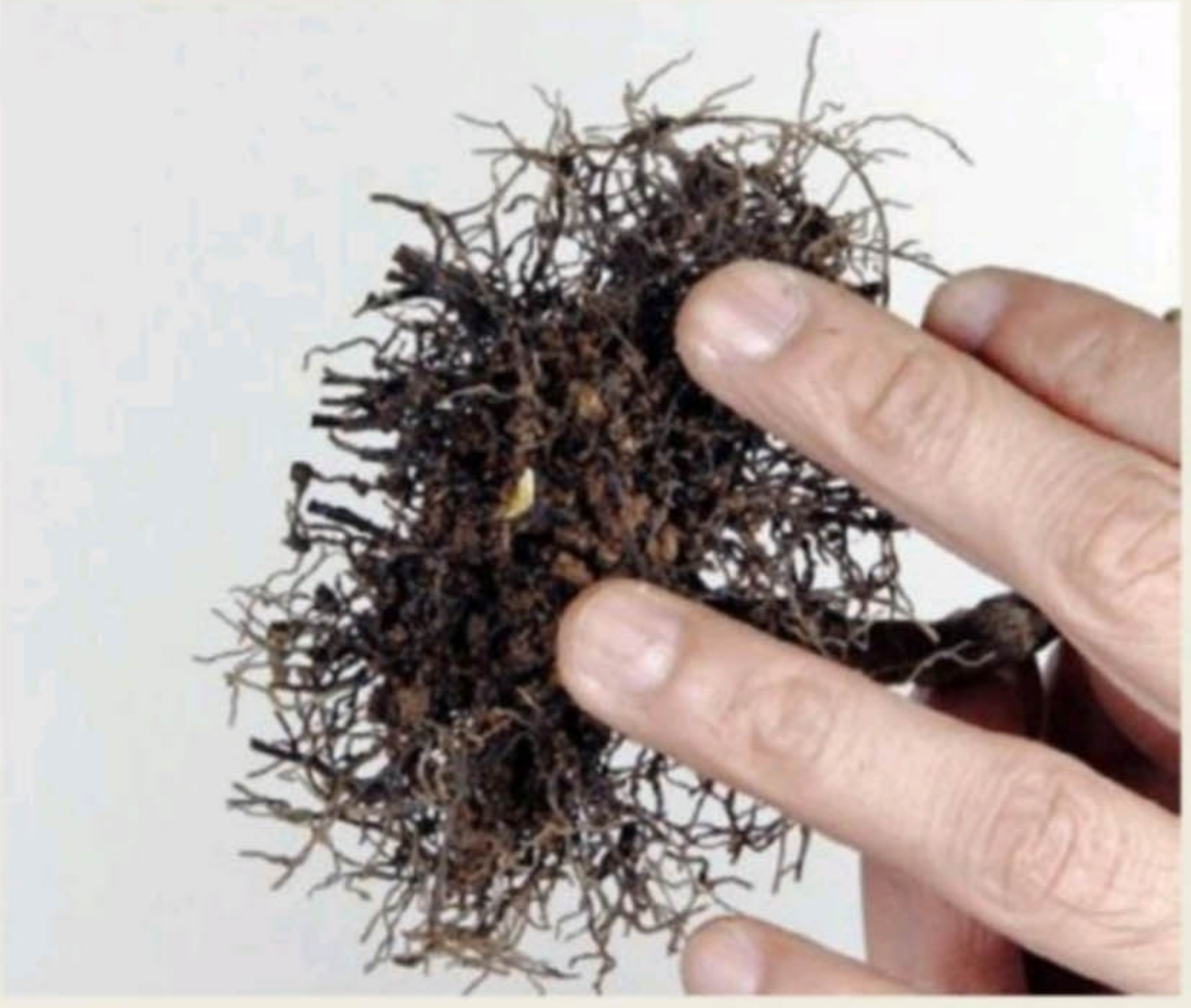
A different persimmon seedling, also 3 – 4 years old, that had undergone one prior repotting. The upper roots were already well developed, but a thick lower root mass remained. This example demonstrates what the previously treated tree might look like after one year



Since the upper roots had developed sufficiently, the remaining taproot was removed entirely. The image above shows the initial rough cut and the image above right shows an even deeper cut, removing all the taproot



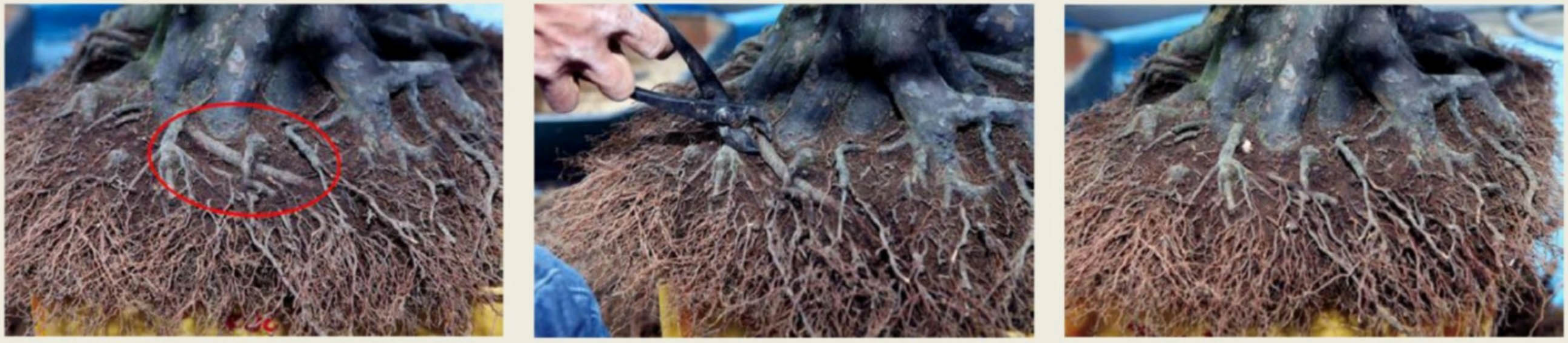
Base view after taproot removal and trimming of the fine roots



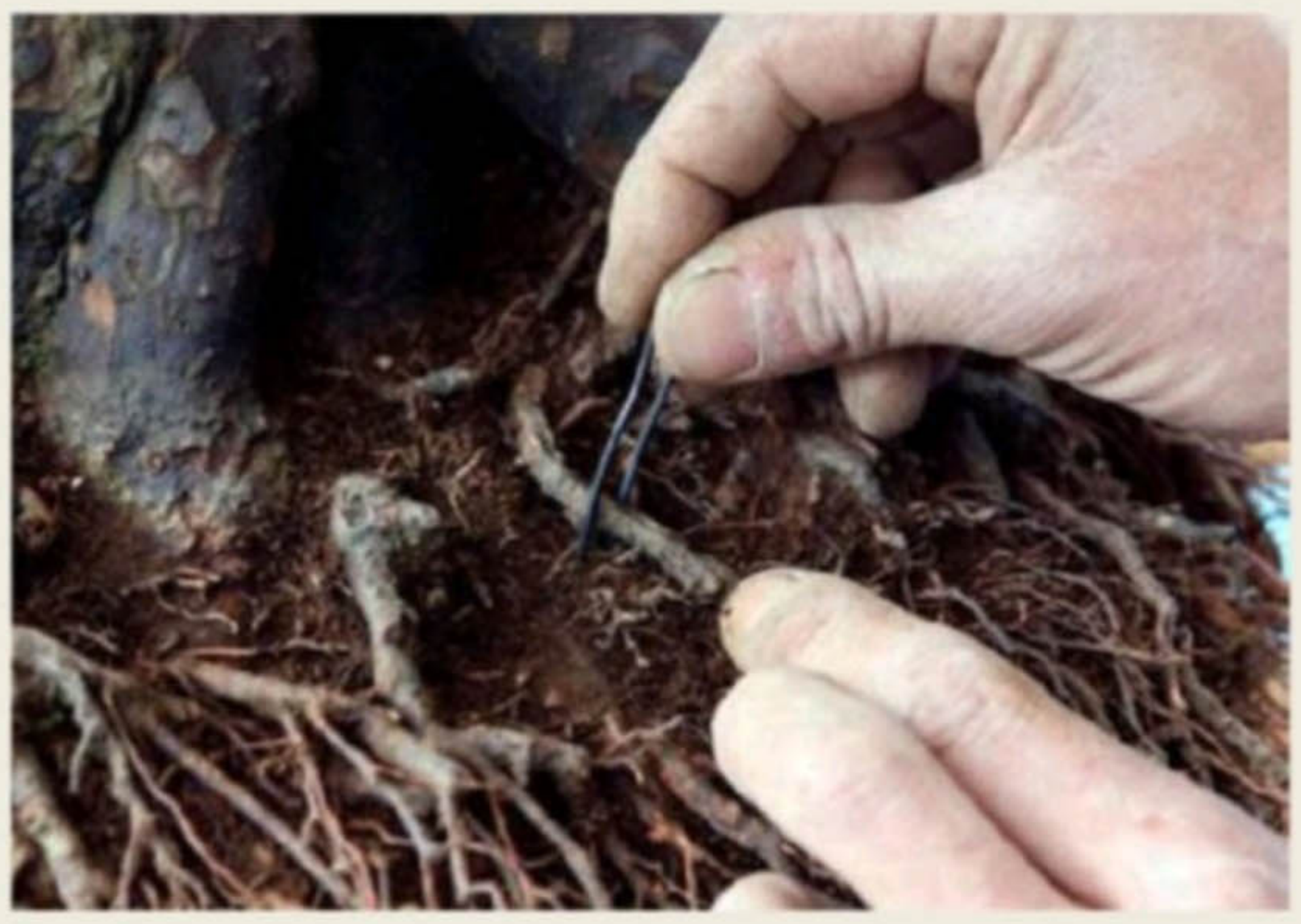
Side view after the root pruning. Compared with its earlier appearance, the roots are significantly more compact and shallow

Techniques for creating a beautiful nebari

Removing unwanted roots

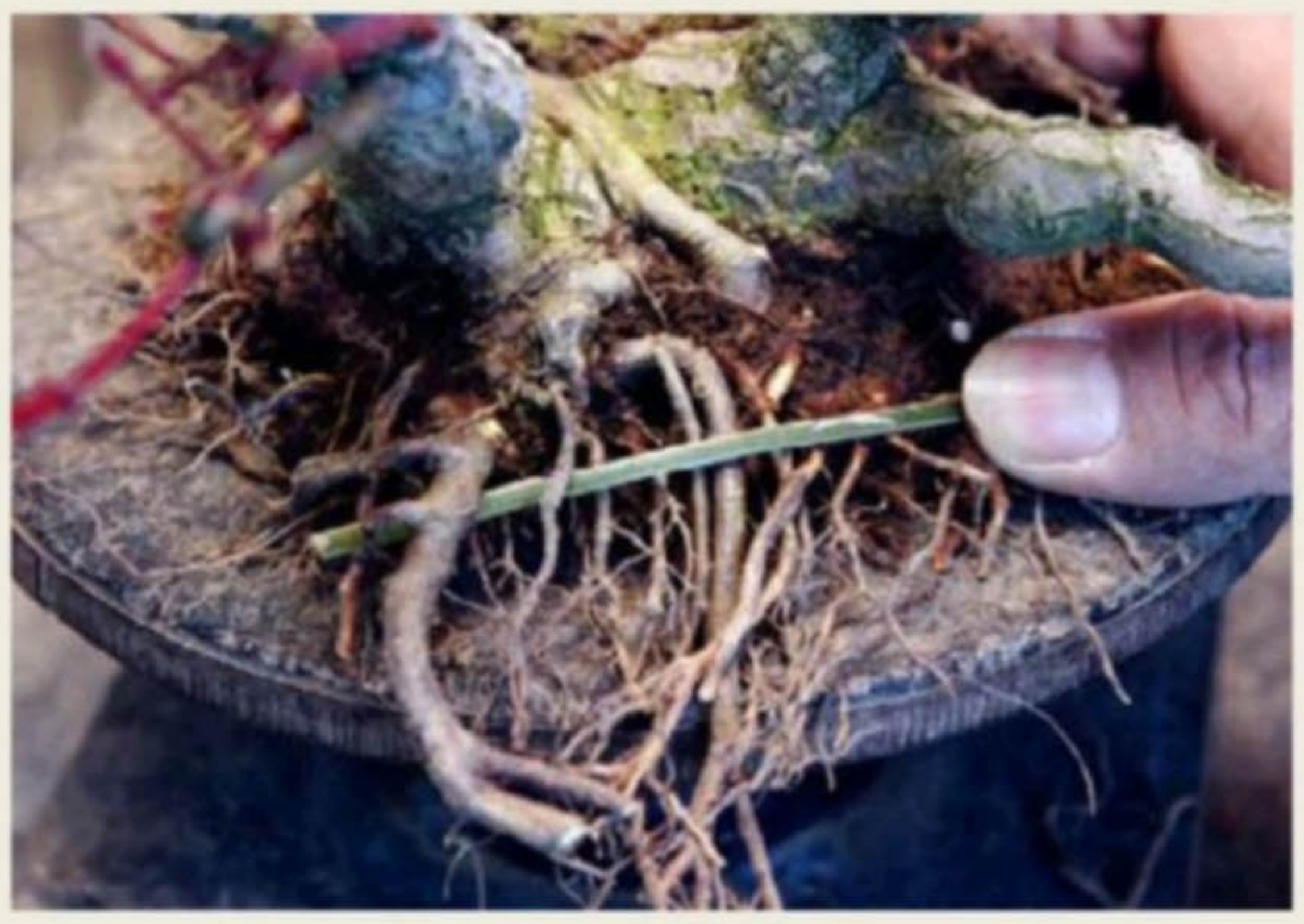


Crossing or overlapping roots (red oval) are undesirable and should be removed to promote an evenly-spread root system. In this case, a downward-growing root was cut off at its base to remove the overlapping roots



Changing root directions with wire. Fine roots can be repositioned using U-shaped wire to hold them in place, guiding growth in the desired direction

Roots that grow upwards from the base can be pressed down using wire anchors, or long bamboo chopsticks during the repotting to improve the angle

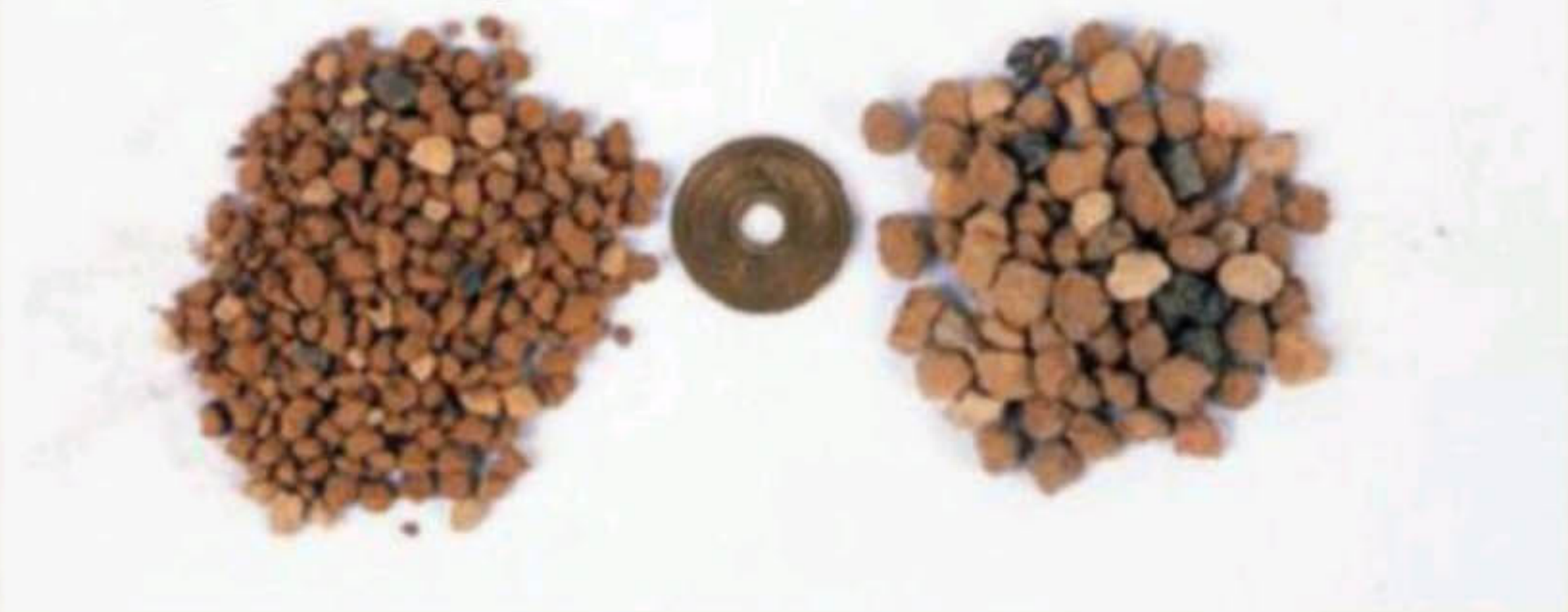


Basic steps for potting into the new container and aftercare

Once root pruning is complete, the tree should be repotted using fresh soil. The soil composition and particle size will vary depending on the tree species and growing conditions, but a common standard mix consists of Akadama as the base with 20%–30% of a solid grit, such as mountain sand, mixed in. For those who find preparing soil difficult, pre-mixed commercial bonsai soil is available as a good alternative.

Secure drainage mesh to the holes and then prepare tie-down wires. It's usual to first put a layer of larger particle soil in the base of a pot in order to act as the drainage or aeration layer, with the main soil mix poured into a mound on top of that. Once the tree is seated on the mound, it is moved slightly from side to side to ensure no gaps and that the tree sits at the correct front and angle. The tree is then secured using the tie-down wires. Soil is poured in and around the roots, and worked into all the gaps using a bamboo chopstick.

Preparing the soil



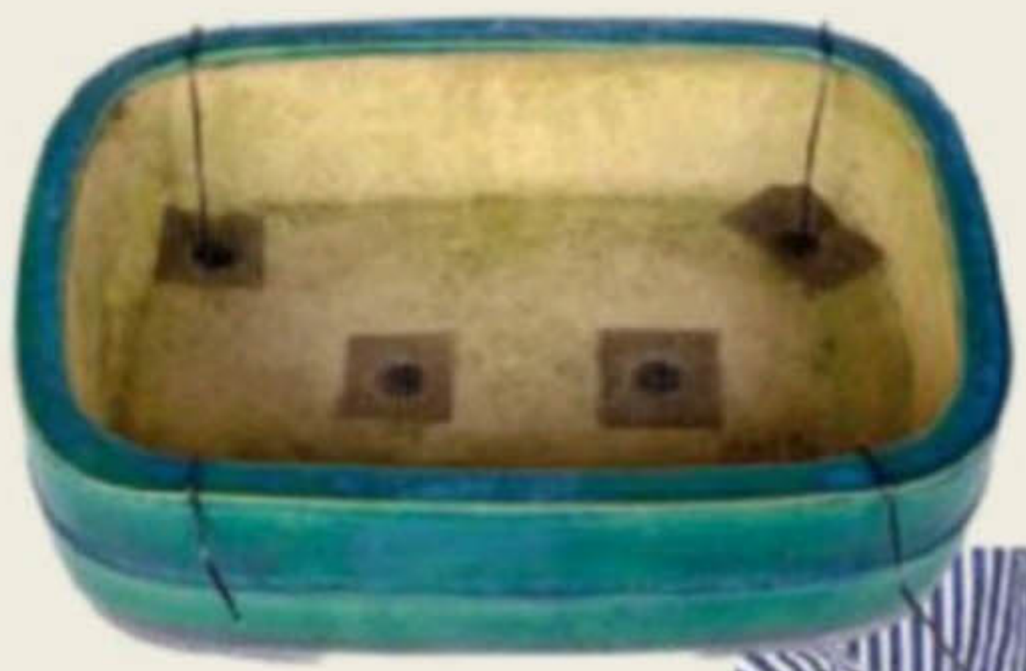
Large particle soil (right), typically coarse pumice or some large particles of the same soil mix, used for drainage. The main soil (left): generally Akadama soil mixed with mountain sand

In order to protect the soil from drying out after repotting, a layer of chopped sphagnum moss can be applied to the soil surface. Do not fertilise immediately after repotting, wait for at least a month before doing so.

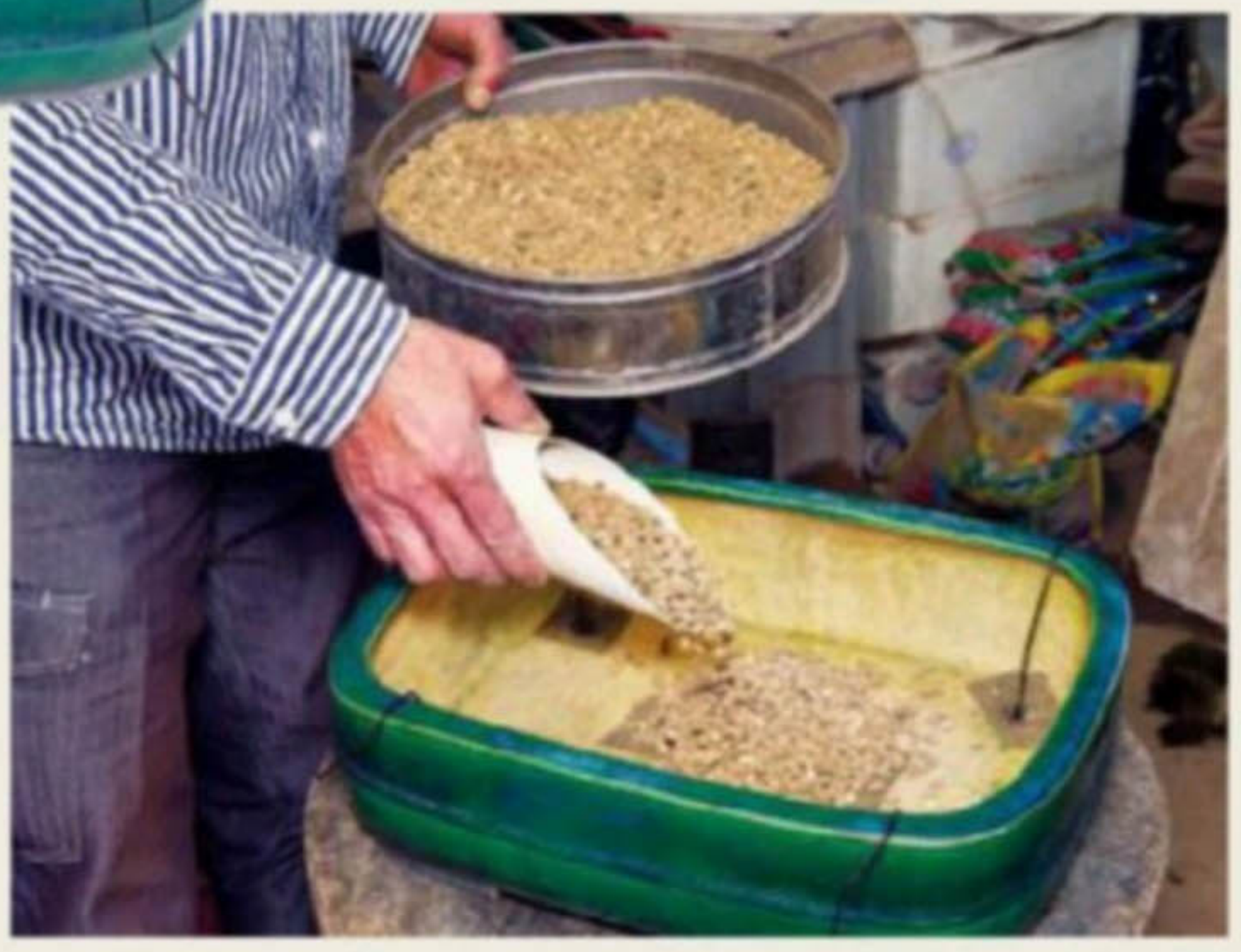
If soil particle sizes are inconsistent, water drainage can deteriorate quickly. Even when using pre-mixed commercial bonsai soil, it is advisable to sieve it before use to remove fine dust

If repotting in mid-March, the tree can be placed back on the bonsai bench immediately. However, for older trees or in areas where late frosts are a concern, protect the tree in a sheltered area or under eaves for 1–2 weeks before moving it back outdoors

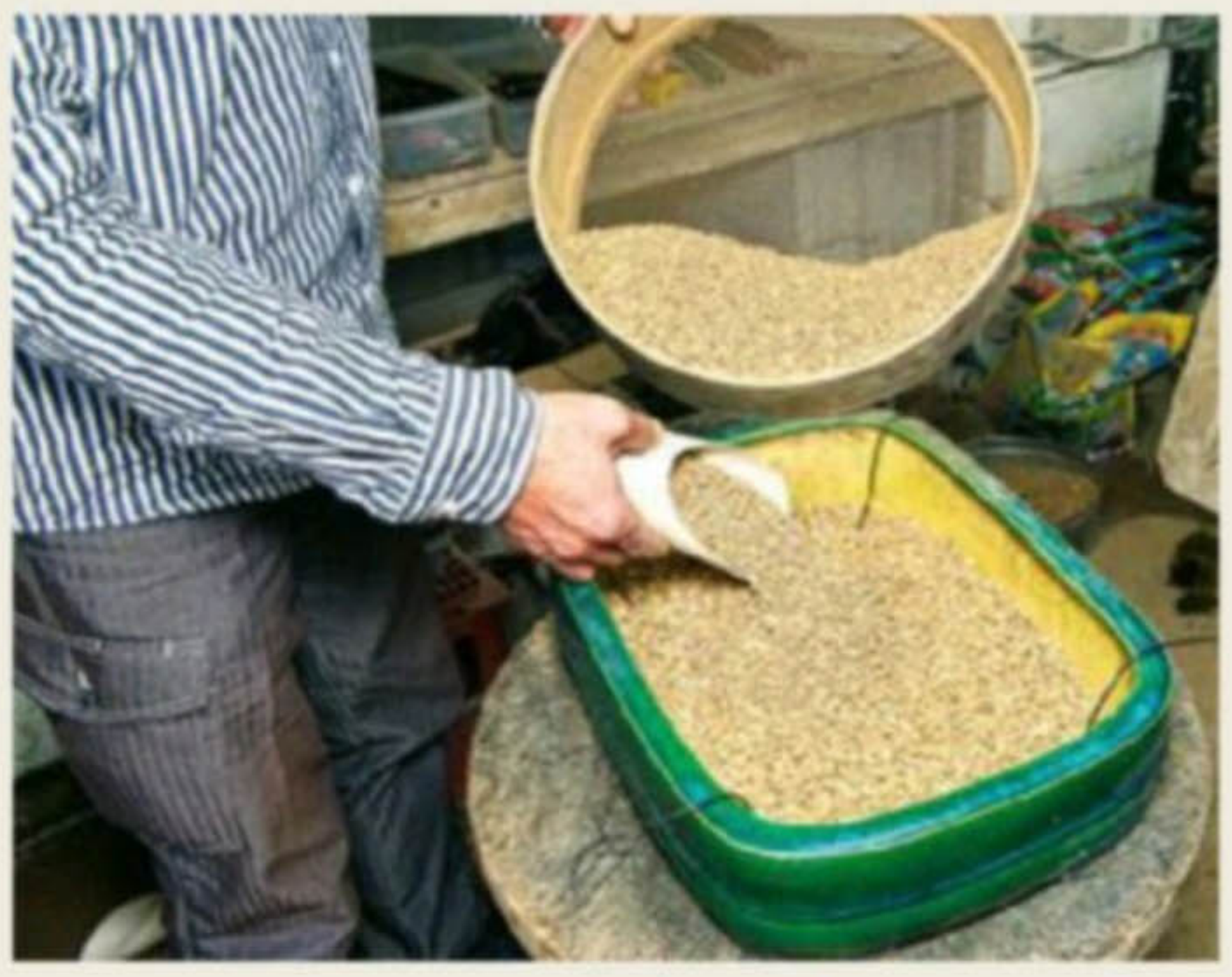
How to plant



Cover drainage holes with mesh and secure it with wire. Thread additional wire through the pot to later tie and secure the tree



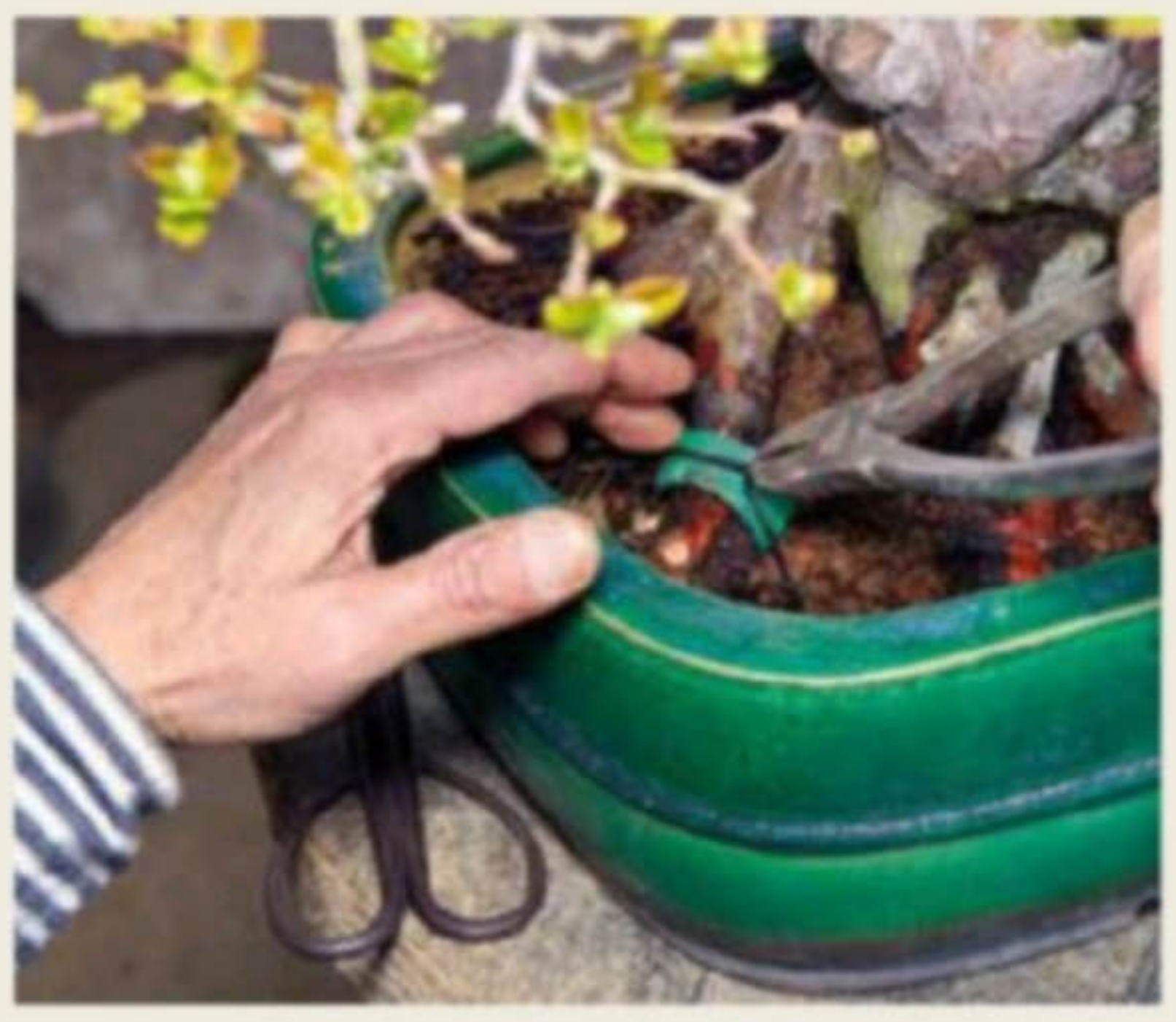
Add a layer of large particle soil at the bottom. This ensures proper drainage and prevents waterlogging



Carefully add the main soil without mixing it with the large particle soil. Mound the soil slightly in the middle to sit the tree on

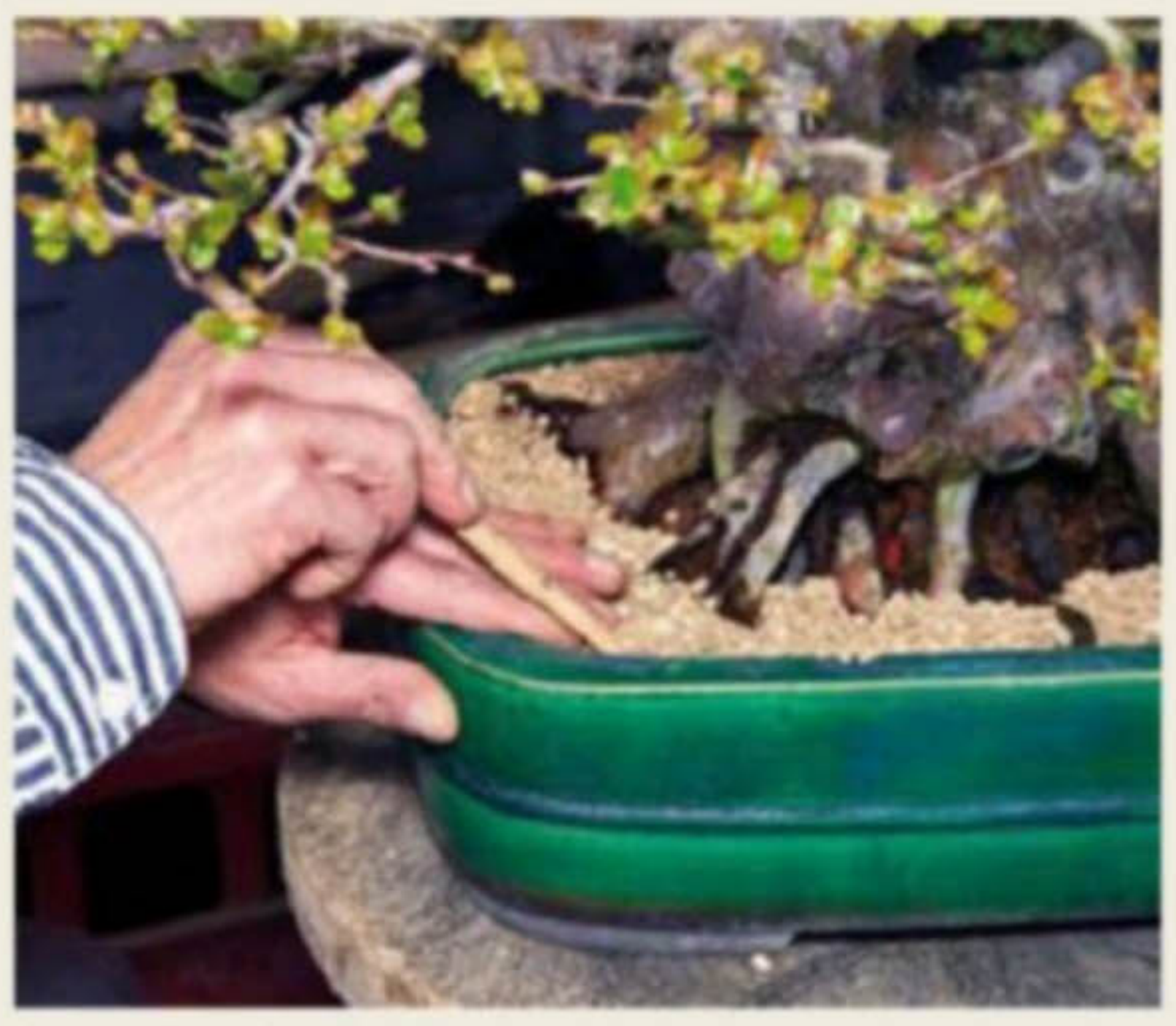
Position the tree on the mound. Gently move it from side to side to help the roots settle into the soil, and seat the tree at the correct angle

Check the front and the angle of the tree and then tie it down so that it cannot move, using the previously prepared wires

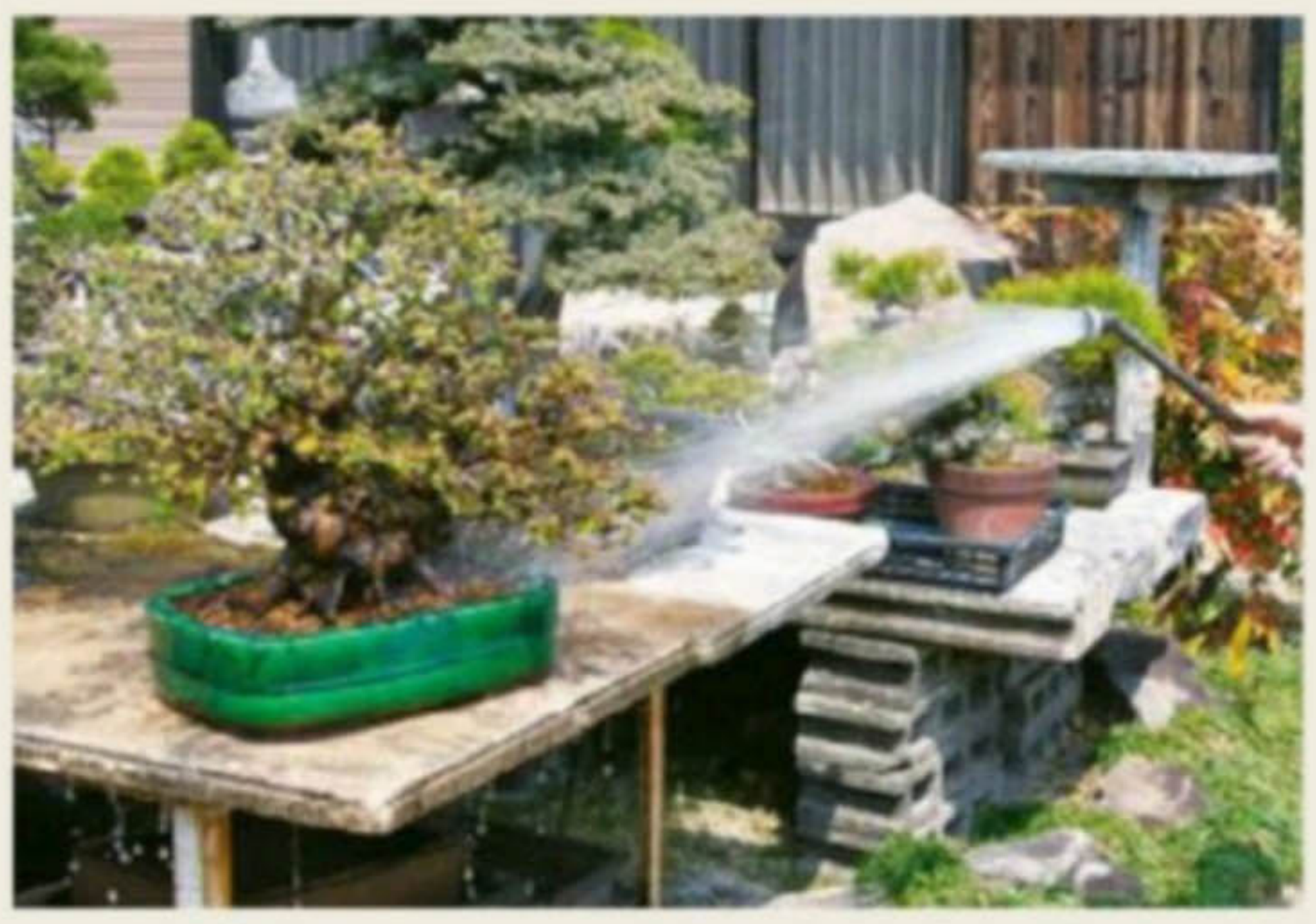


Fill the remaining space with soil. Add slightly more than needed, ensuring the soil settles well around the root ball

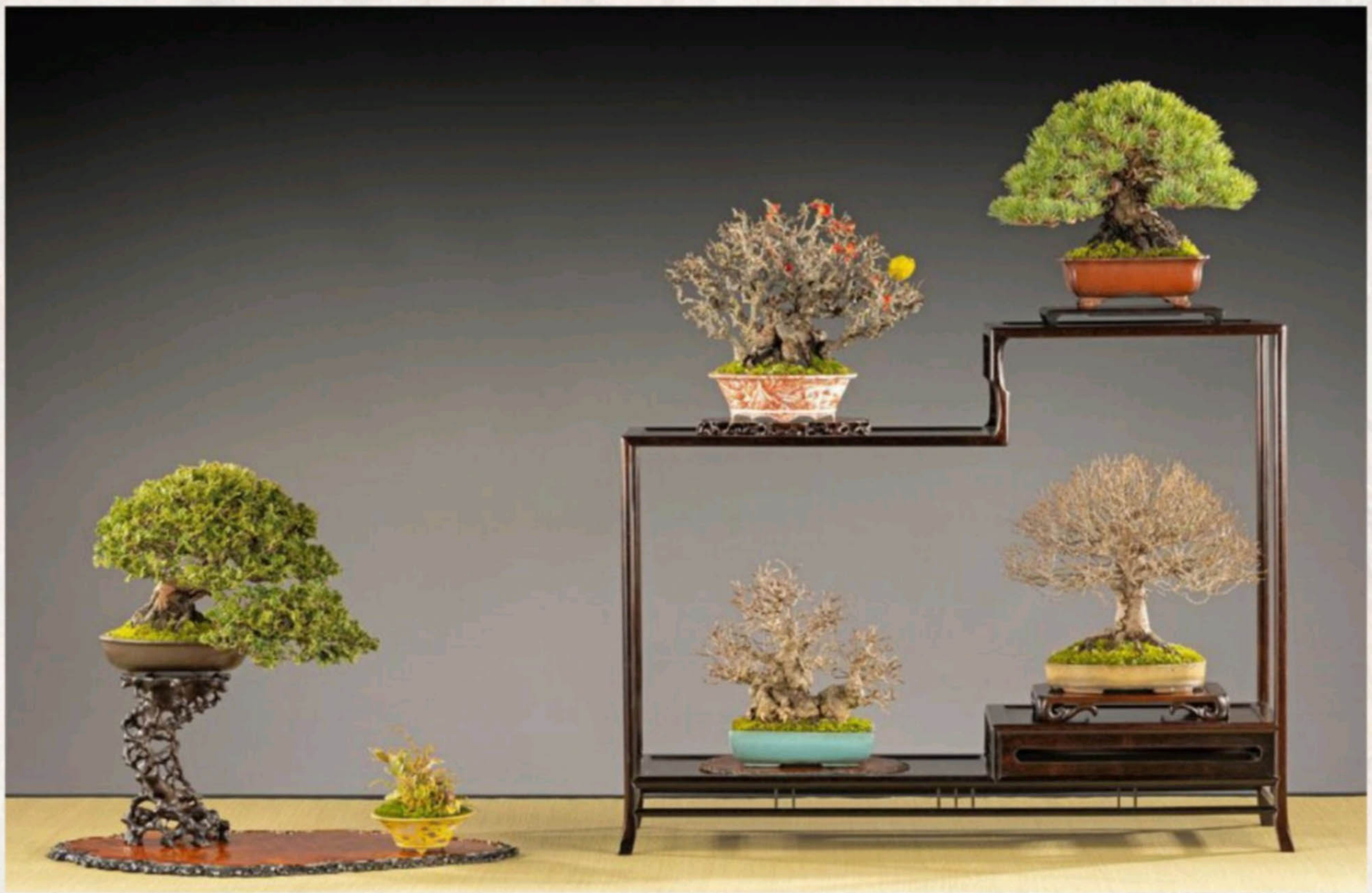
Use a bamboo chopstick to gently press and work the soil into the root gaps. Move chopstick rhythmically in different spots to distribute the soil evenly



Water thoroughly to remove fine dust and ensure the soil settles properly



THE 25TH TROPHY

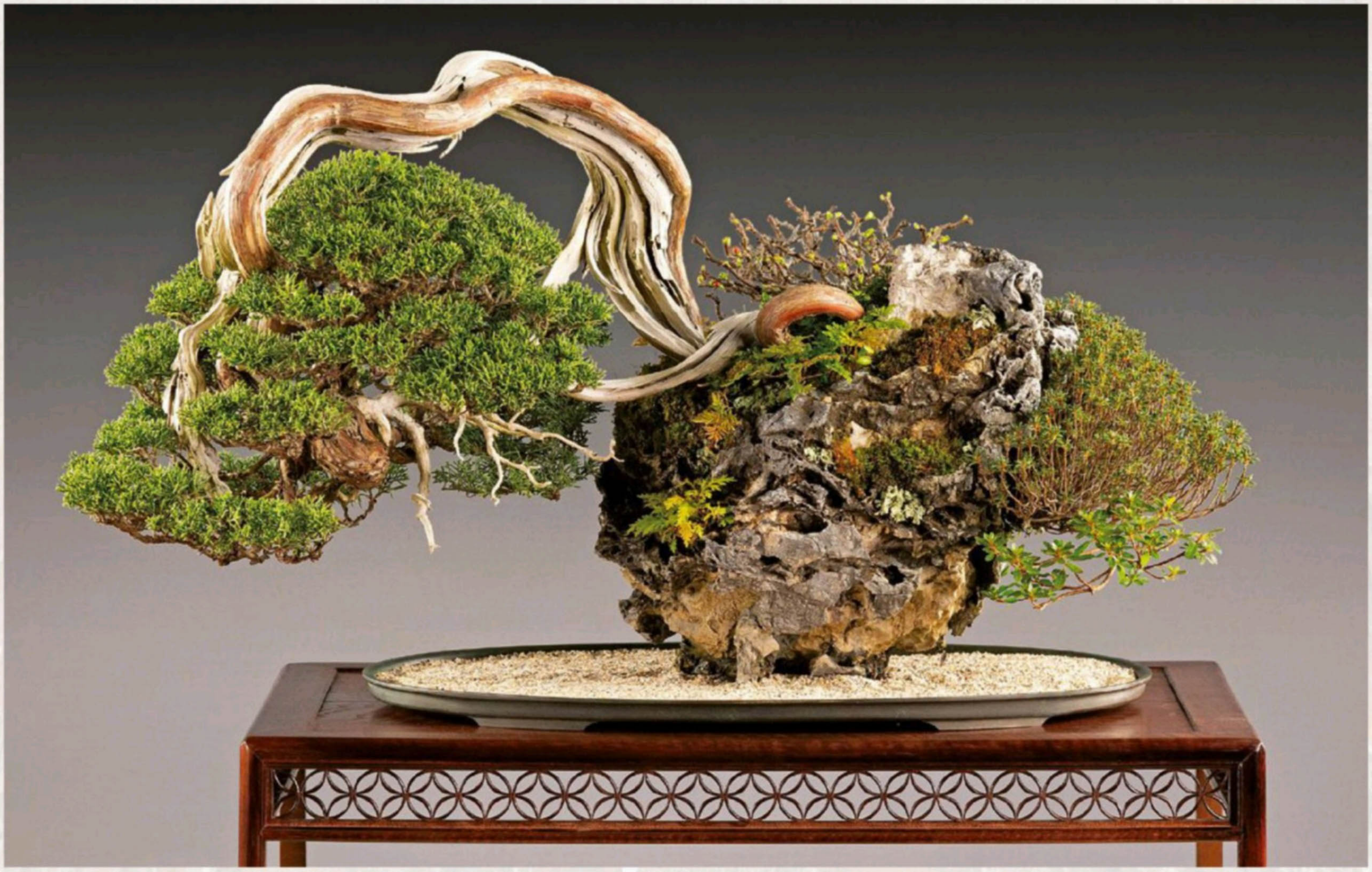


Shohin winner

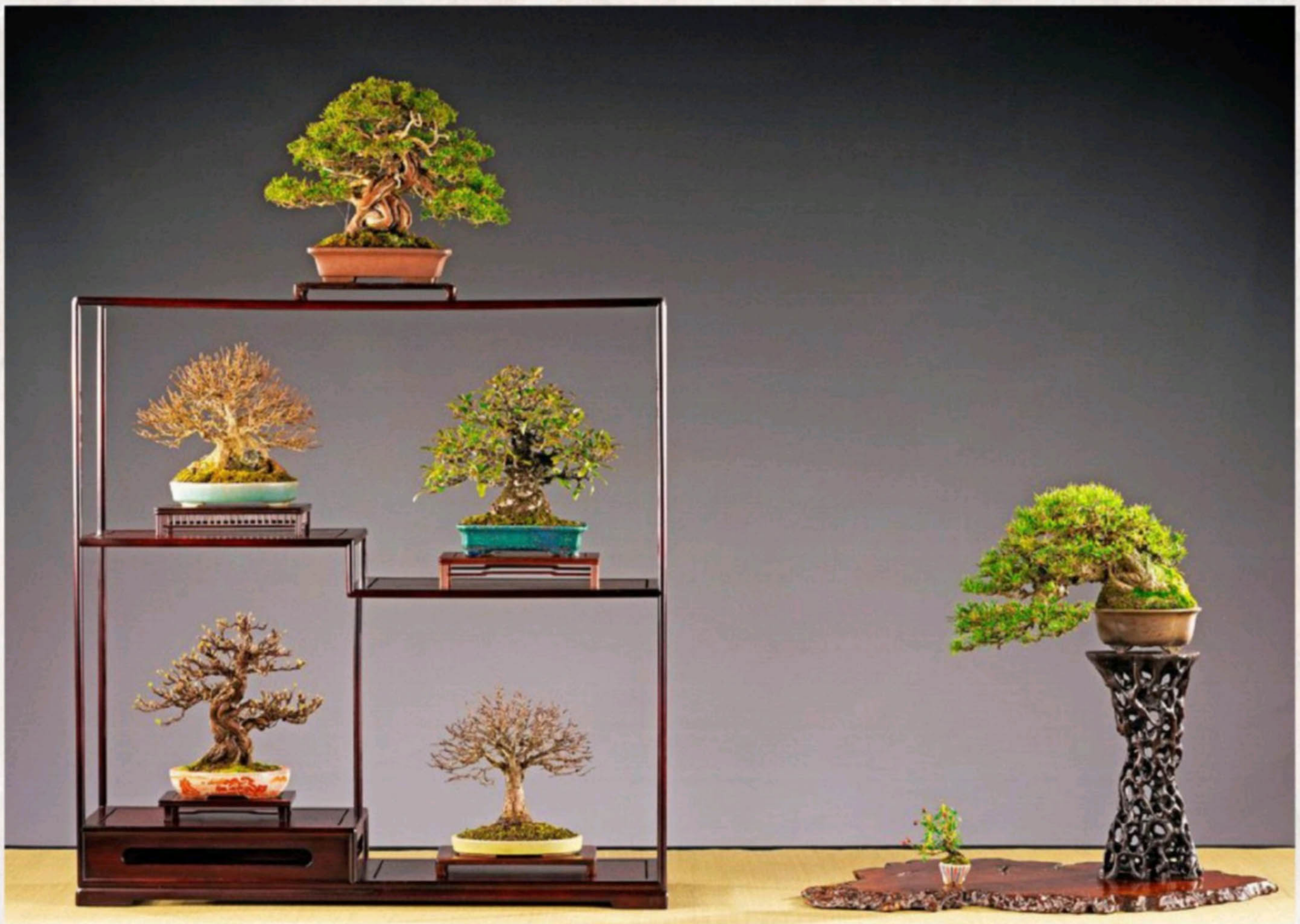
Pinus parviflor,a
Chaenomeles speciosa chojubai,
Zelkova serrata,
Carpinus coreana,
Chamaecyparis obtusa:
Bob Van Ruitenbeek

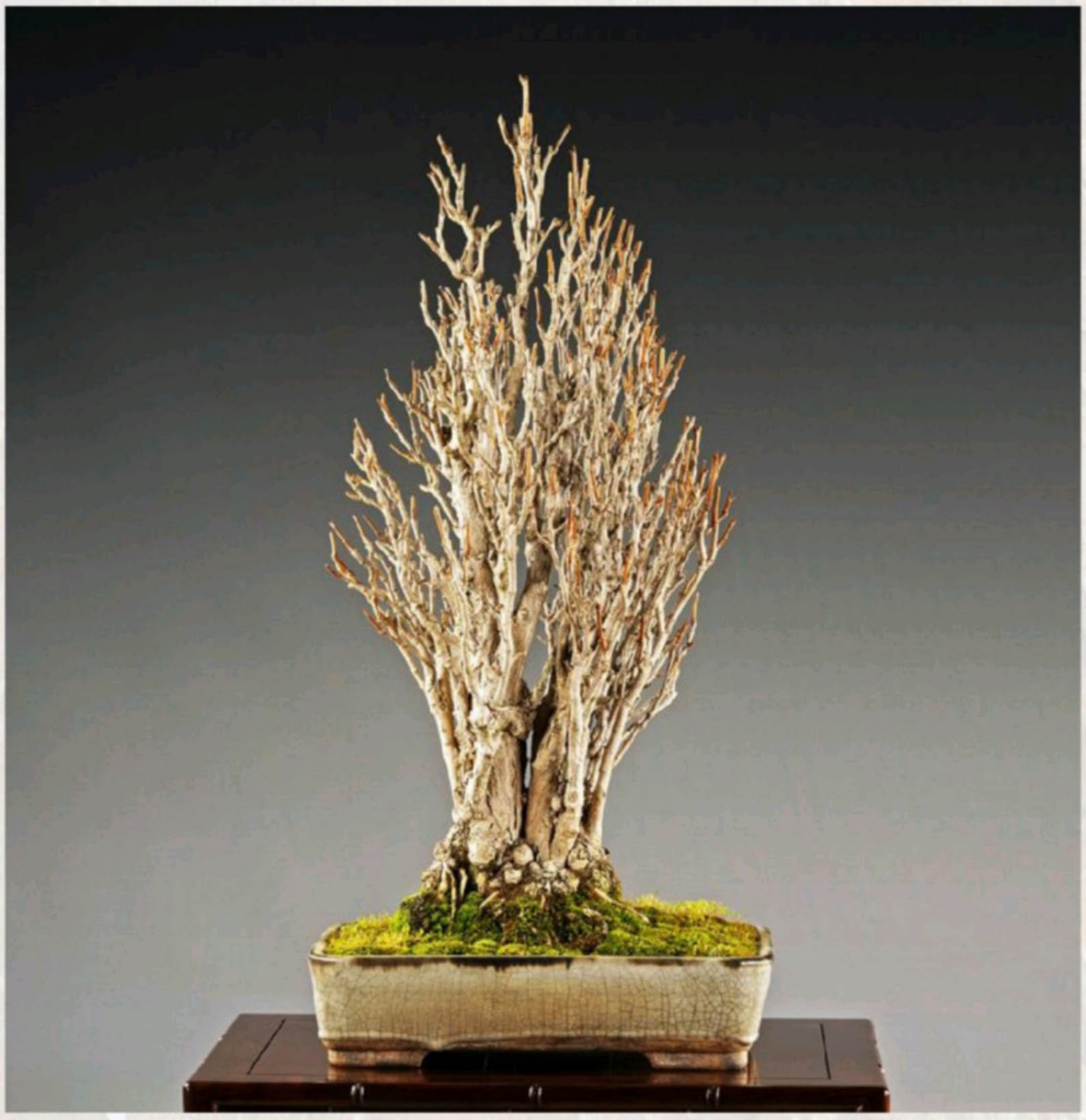
Winner rock planting

Juniperus chinensis 'itoigawa': Alexandre Escudero

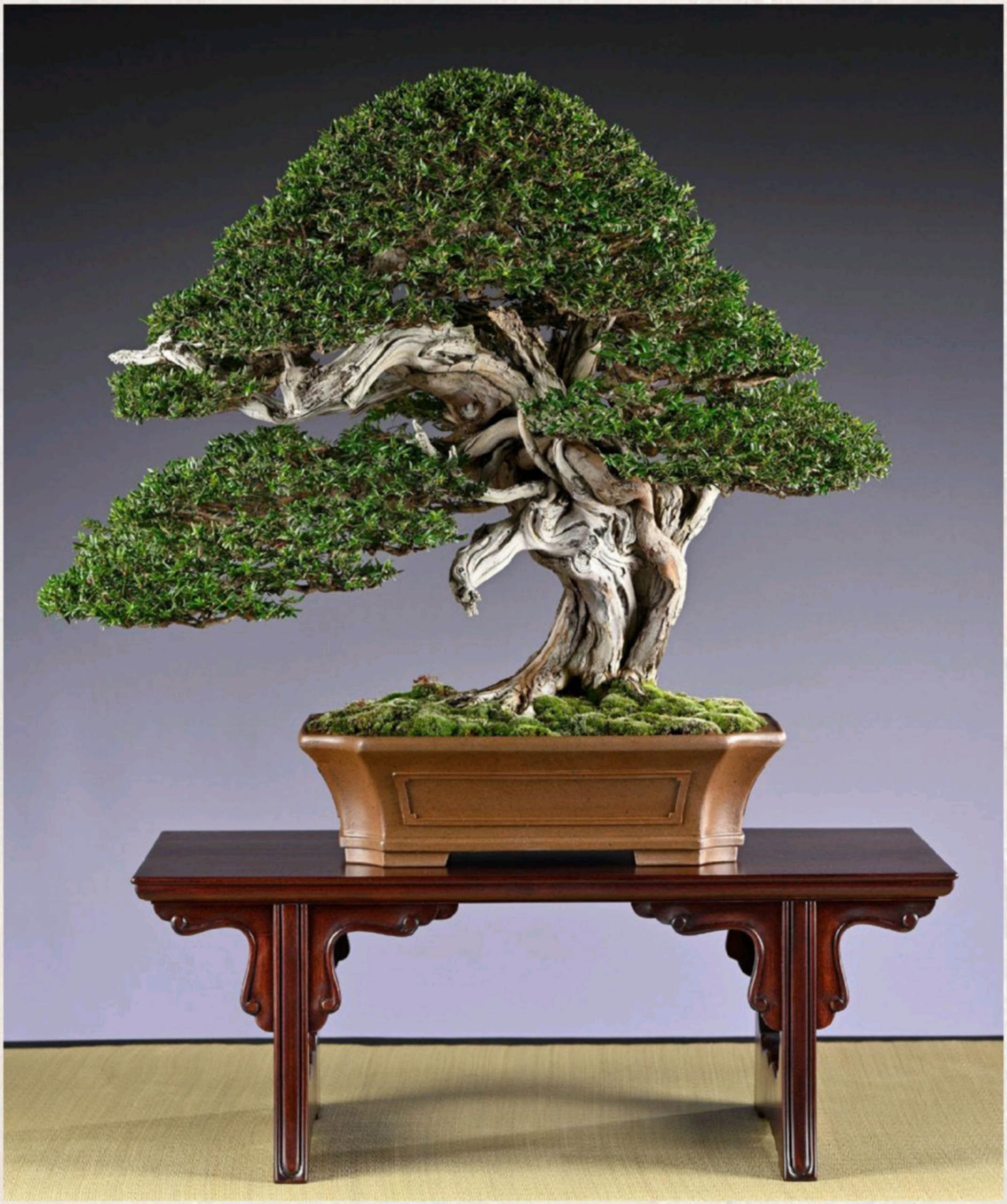


Shohin
Hartmut Münchenbach





Best tree of BAB
(Bonsai Association Belgium)
Ginkgo biloba: Chris Pieterse



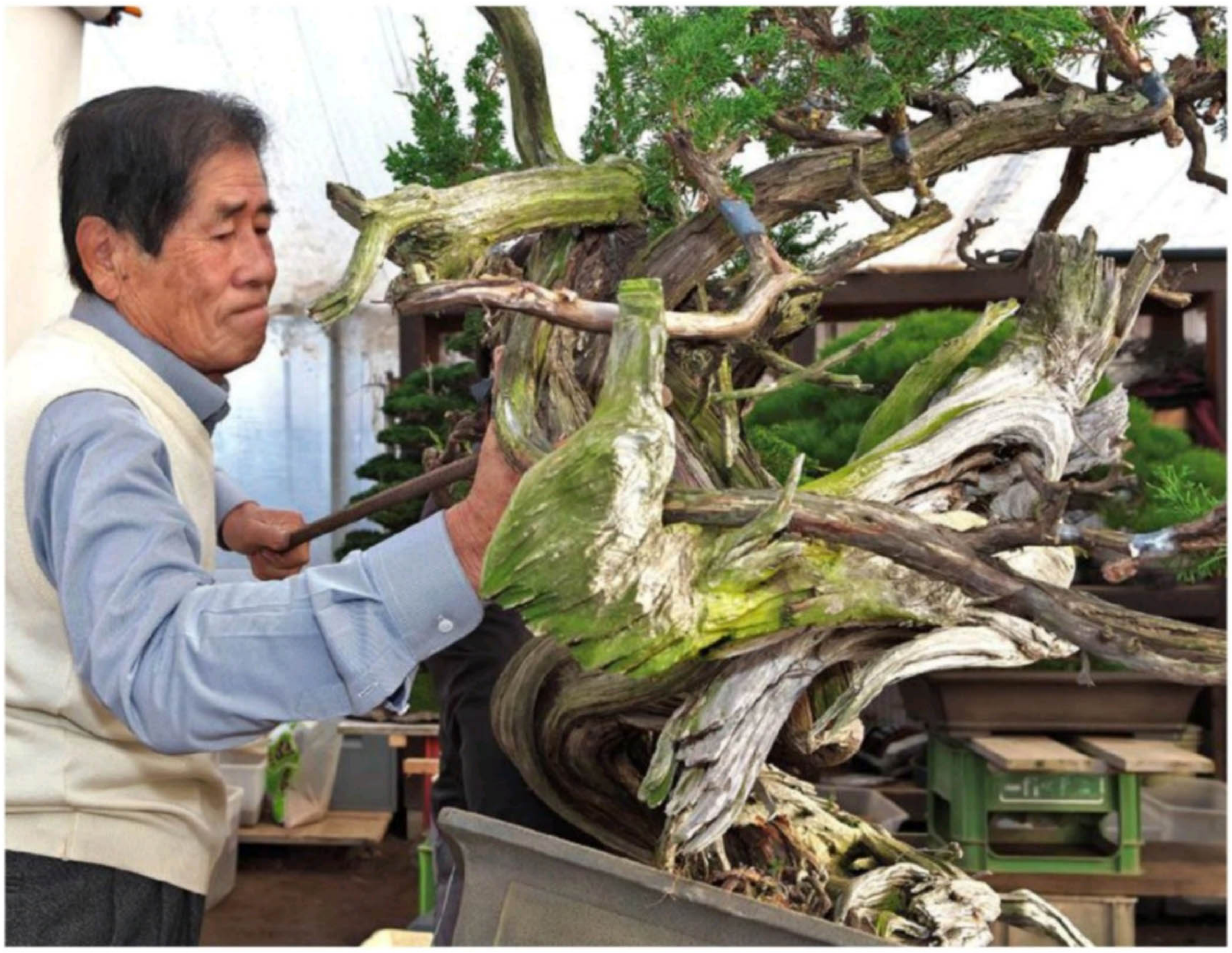
Conifer nomination
Taxus baccata: Riccardo Vinciguerra

Love at first sight

Masahiko Kimura creates a masterpiece — again

Text and photography: Kinbon, Japan

This material is a rare find, like a wild horse, and Mr Kimura fell in love with it immediately. At an auction he fiercely competed with two buyers to win it, and he did. The future vision of this bonsai, and the mastery of Mr Kimura will now be put to the test. Taming the wild horse . . .



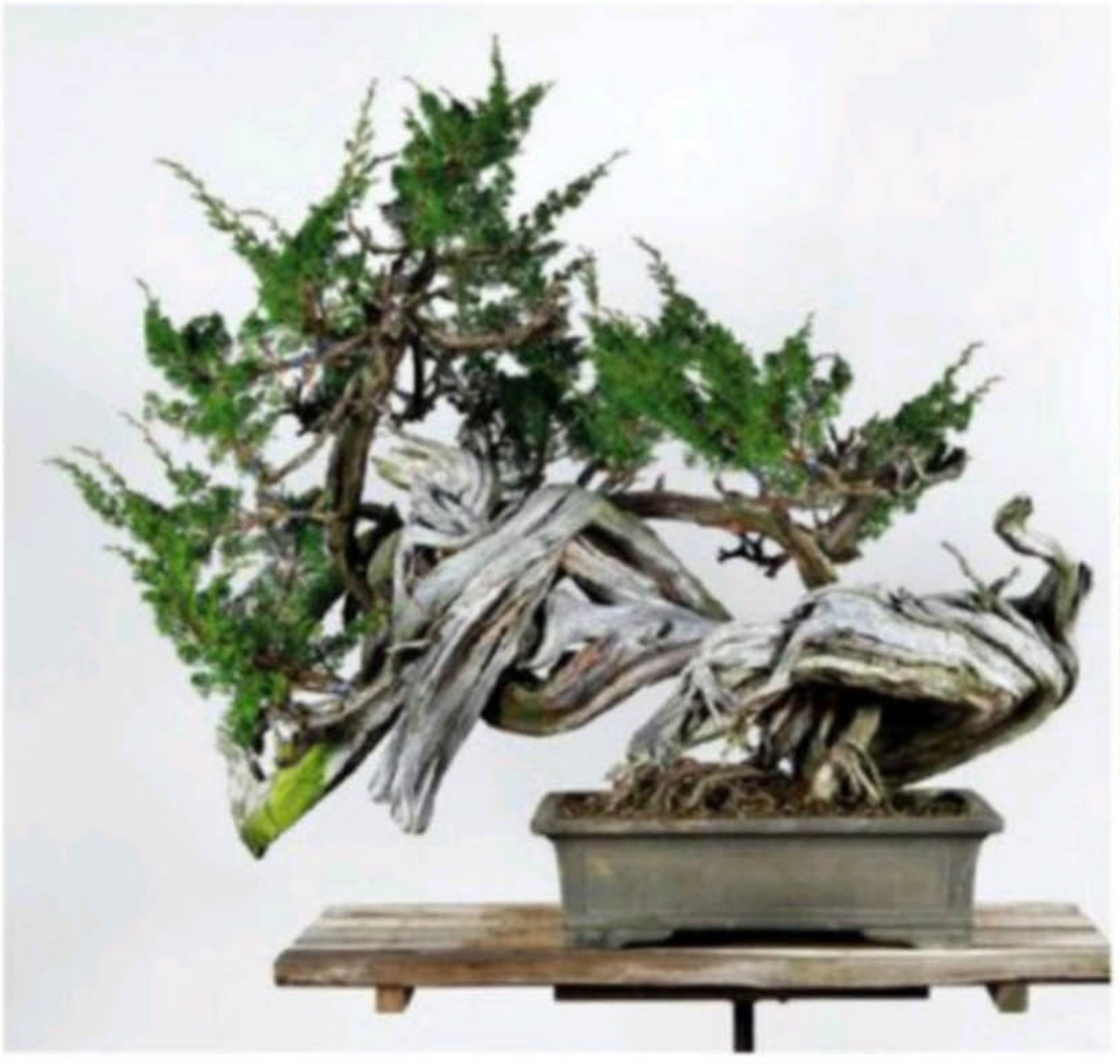
A superb piece of material that moved my heart

'It's been a while since I found such an amazing piece of material,' exclaimed Mr Kimura when he visited the garden where the juniper quietly waited for this moment. The trunk with its shari rises while bending violently from the base. It shows various changes, like intertwining with the live vein, it also stretches out horizontally, reminiscent of the famous 'Toryu-no-mai' or 'The dance of the flying Dragon', Mr Kimura's famous juniper. It is superb bonsai material full of artistry, it's no wonder that Kimura, who has created countless shimpaku junipers, said, 'It has been decades since my heart has moved.'

There are two large straight parts. One comes out from the left of the end trunk, the other extends horizontally to the right. The other reaches the zenith and, on the way, there are small branches of *Itoigawa* grafts attached in various places. Both these branches are straight and lack artistic expression compared with the movement in the trunk, so it is difficult to decide where to place them to create small branches.

It is quite a challenge to decide how to distribute the twigs. Although this is typical of natural shimpaku trees, it is an unusual shape for a bonsai. So, it requires considerable courage as well as skill and imagination to tame this wild horse and shape it into a bonsai.

First, Mr Kimura wants to decide on the front and the angle. Roughly speaking, it seems that a position close to the current front is appropriate, but as is Mr Kimura's usual method, he first looks at the shari alone, finds a place that looks impressive, and then fine-tunes angle and direction. The important time to decide the future of this tree begins.



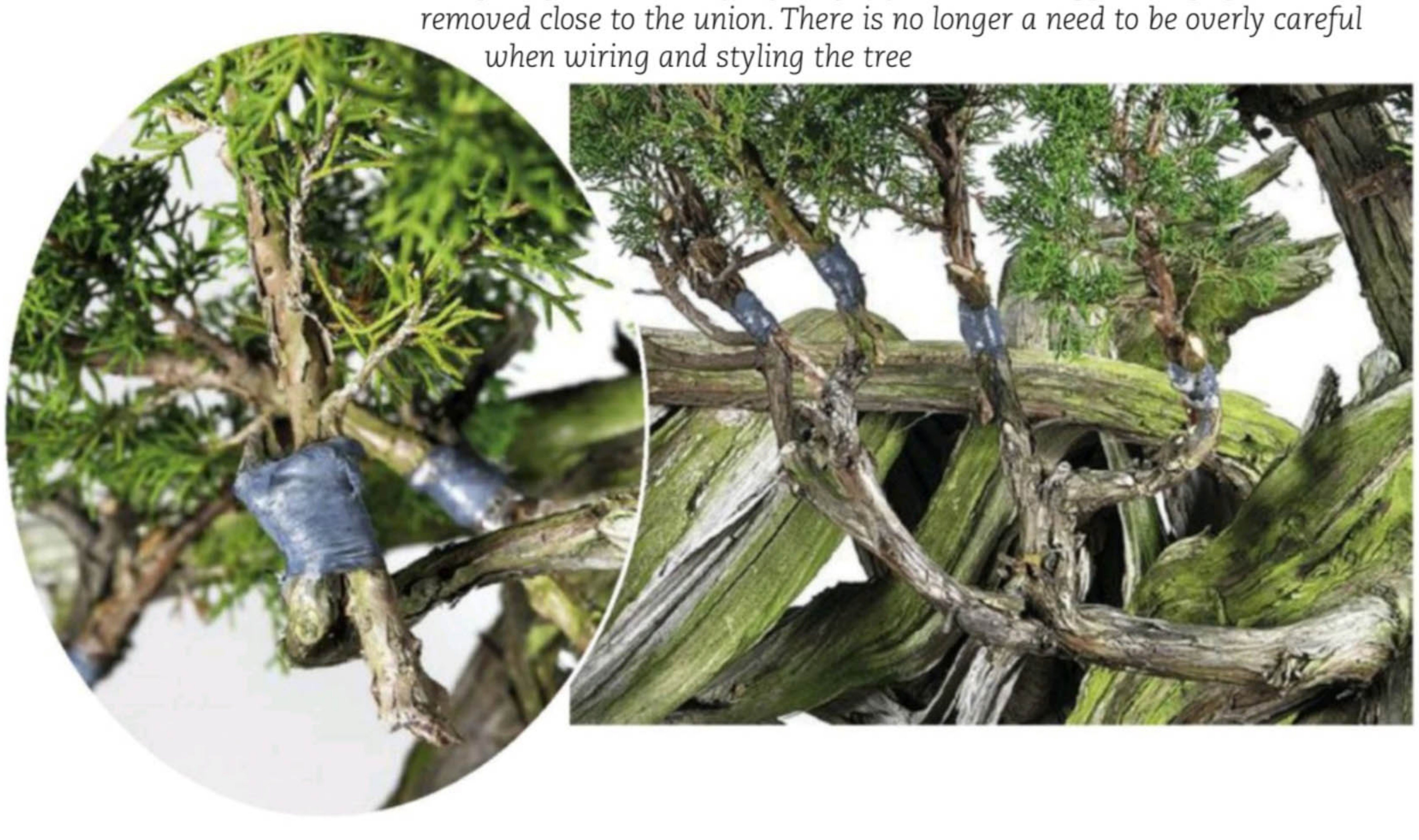
Before work. Front. Height: 100 cm Width: 128 cm. A piece of Tohoku juniper yamadori material that has been grafted with Itoigawa foliage. It has been growing in a pot for many years and, looking at the thickness of the grafted branches, it was grafted 3 to 4 years ago

Right side

Seen from the rear

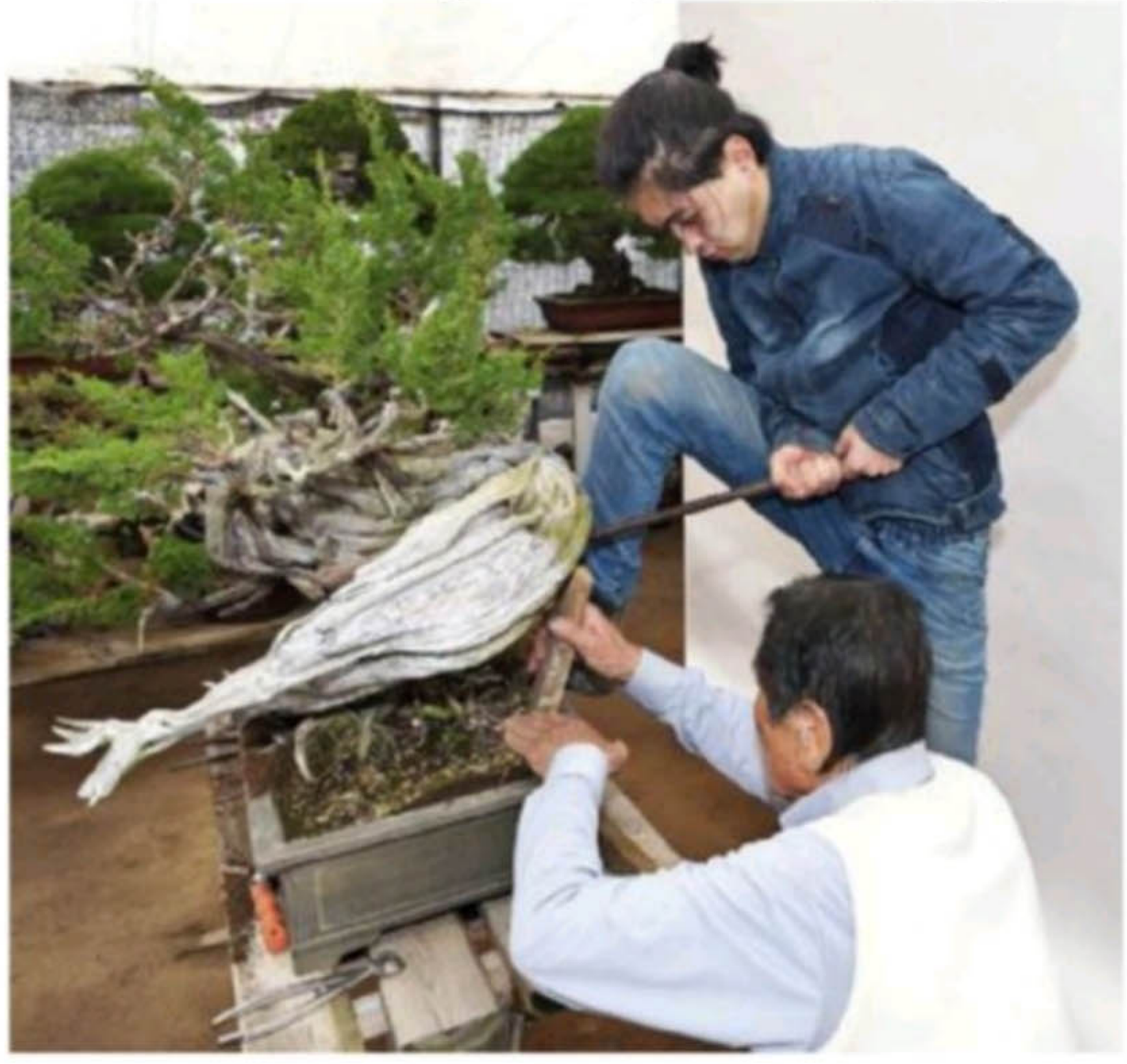
> ***It takes much courage, skill and imagination to tame this wild horse***

As seen from the left side

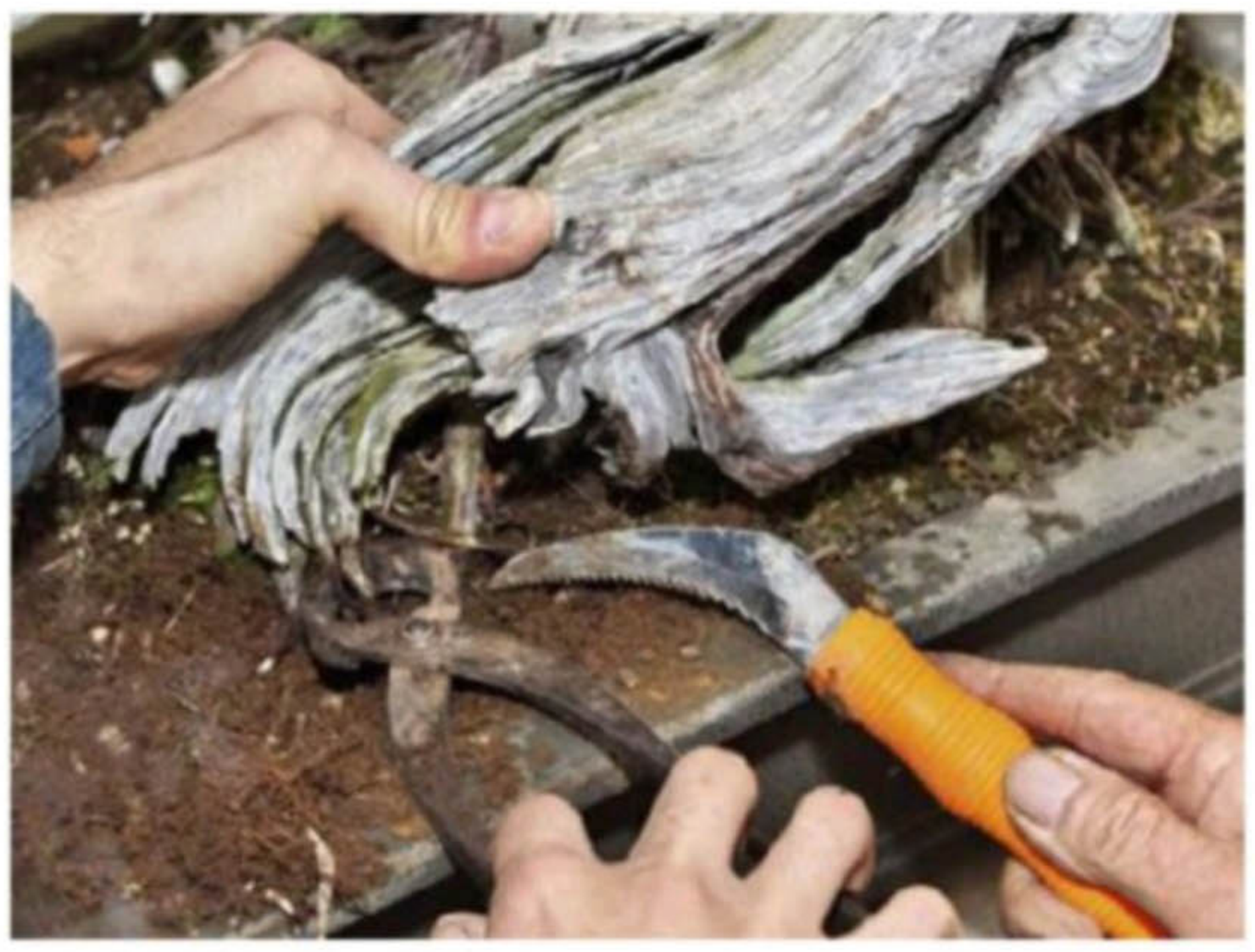


All of the fine branching is full of vigour and the approach grafts have been removed close to the union. There is no longer a need to be overly careful when wiring and styling the tree

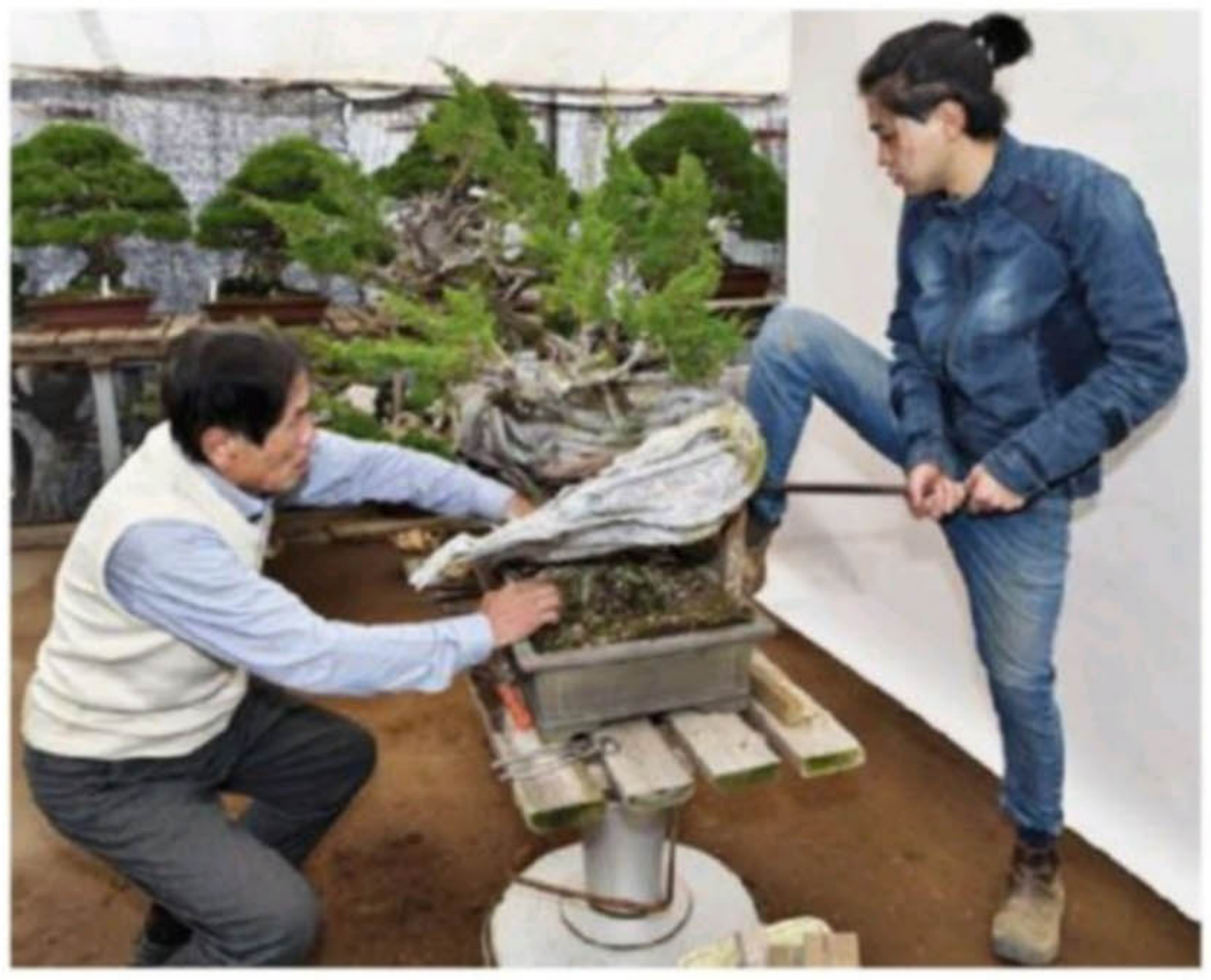
The work begins by changing the angle of the trunk



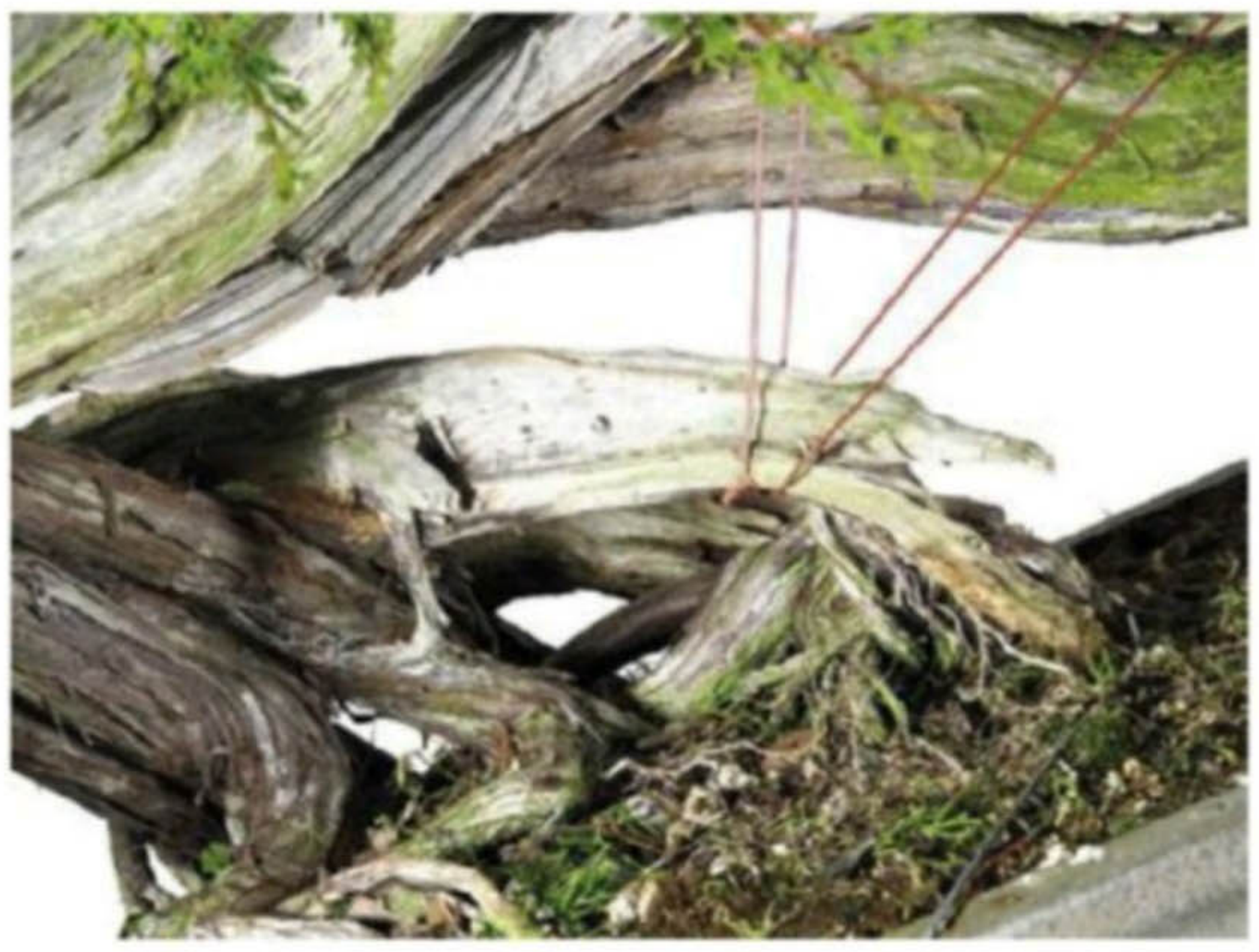
The iron rod is inserted into the back and a wooden block is used as the fulcrum point



In order to stop the shari from disappearing into the soil at the front, the soil is lightly scraped away and the section that will hit the shari is removed

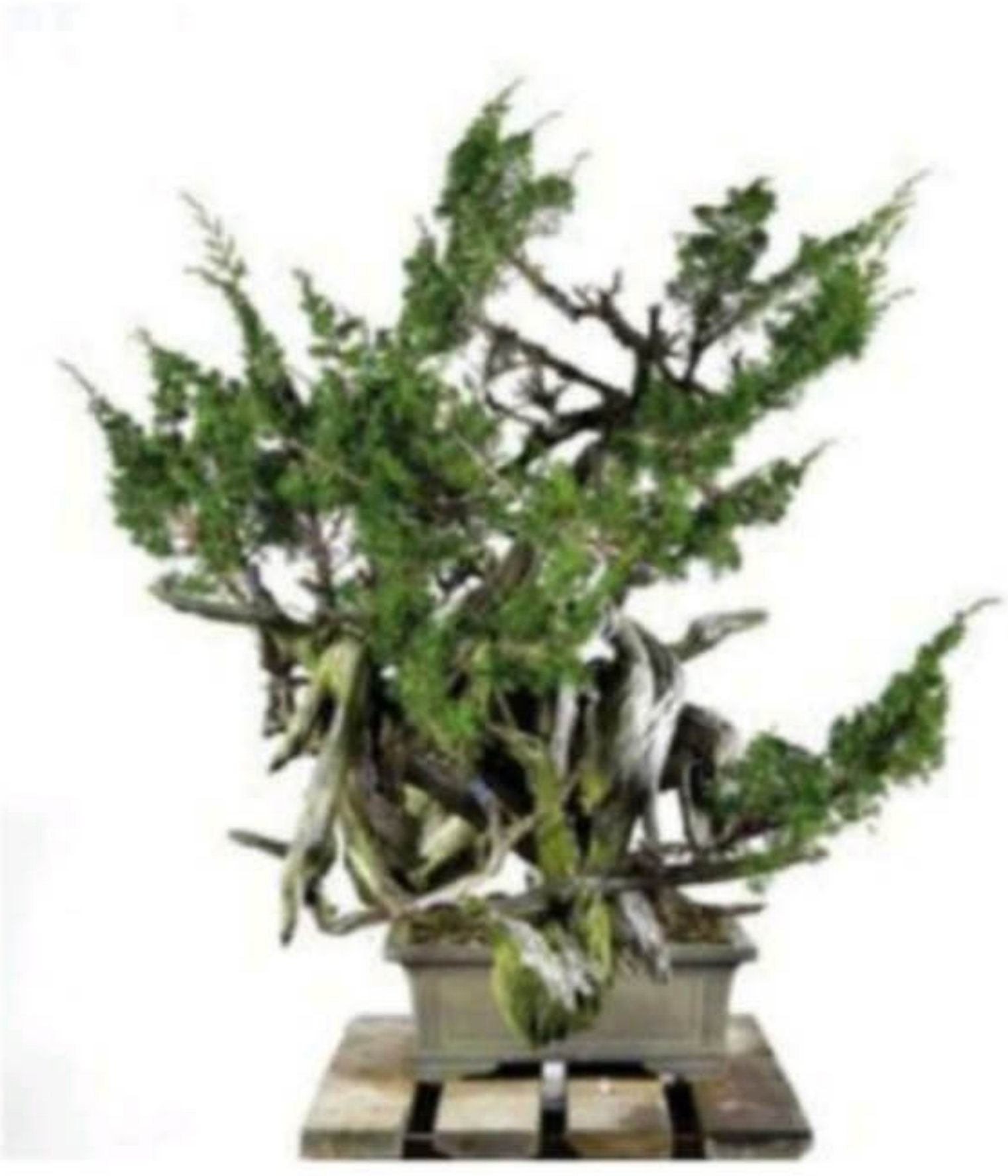


Force is slowly applied, step by step, and the metal bar is pushed towards the front

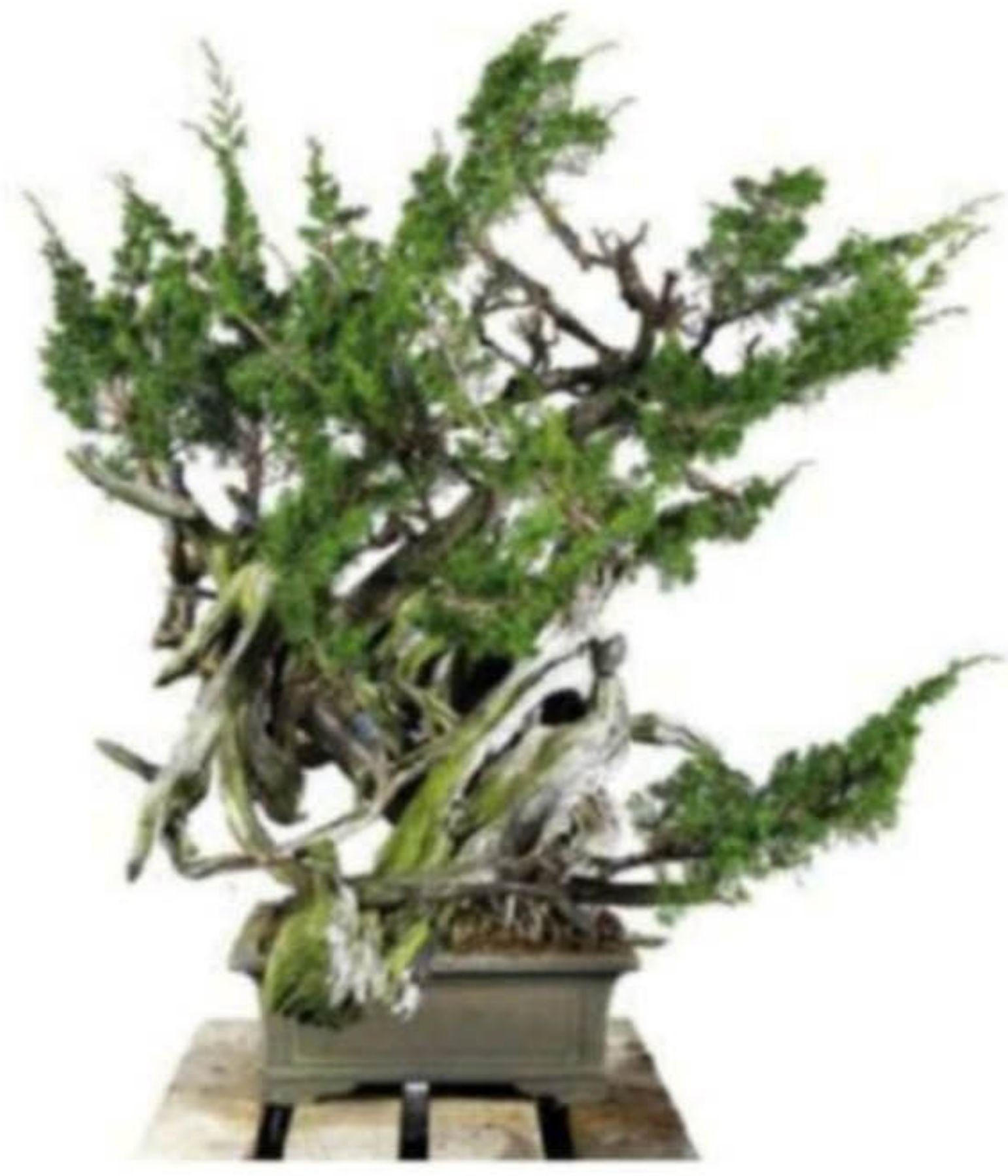


The incredibly tough and hard shari trunk is fixed down using a guy wire

At the start of the work, Mr Kimura began tilting the trunk forward. His apprentice carefully moved the trunk in several steps using an iron bar, securing it with a guy wire once it had been tilted forward by about 30 to 40 degrees. Before the work, the base of the tree showed a thin live vein and nebari, but after the adjustments, it had a thick piece of shari at the base. This added a sense of strength, completely transforming its appearance.

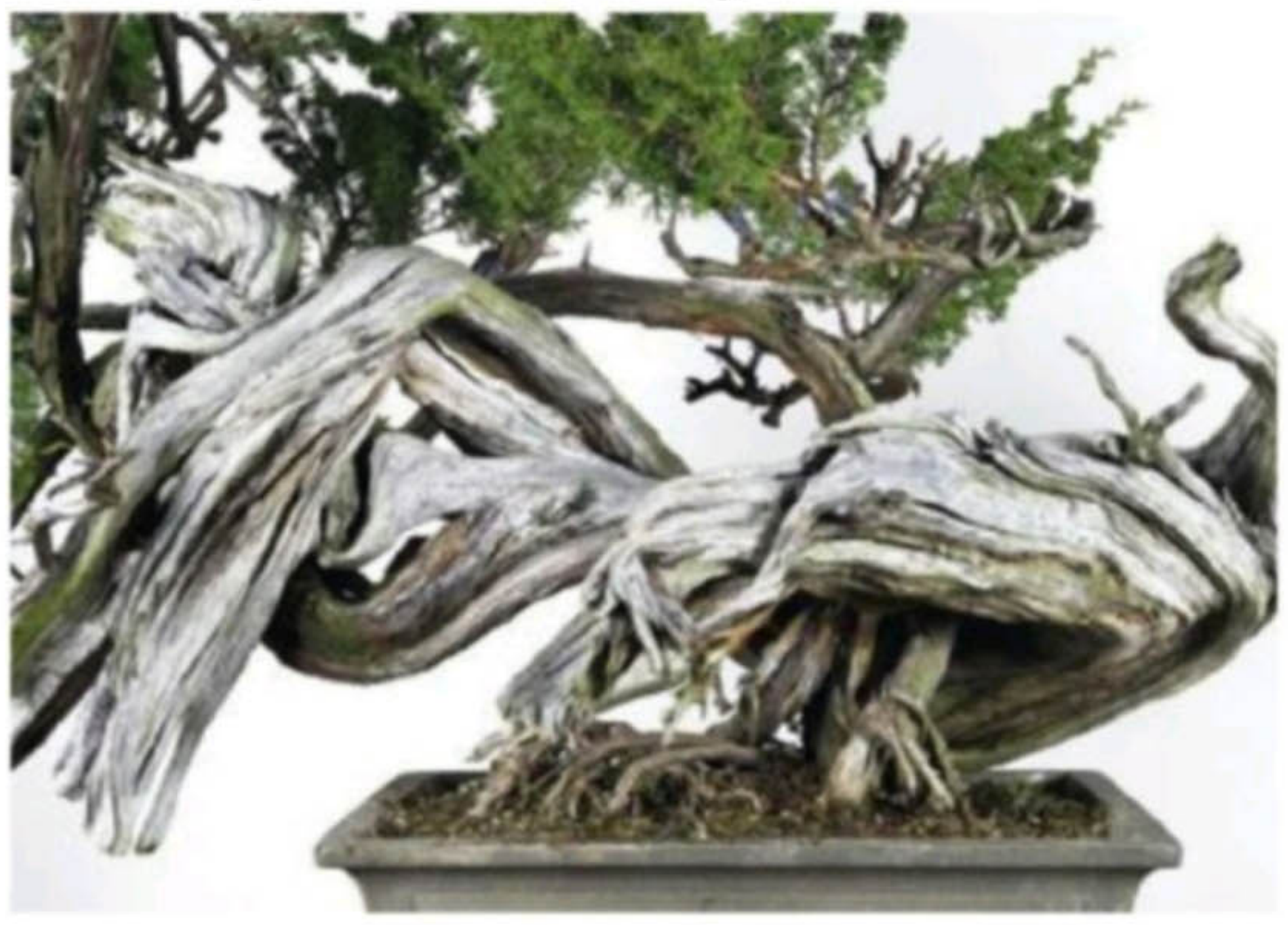


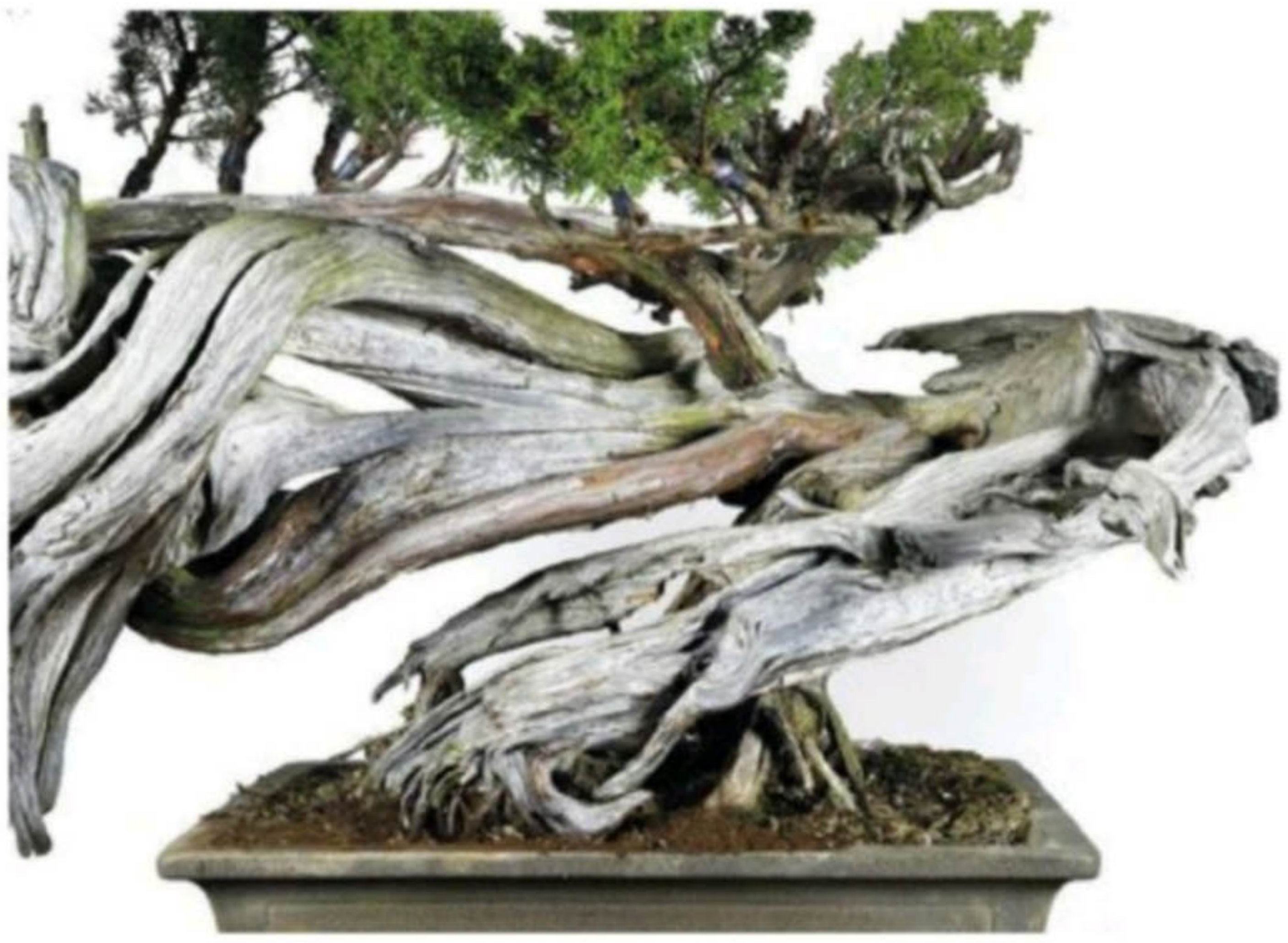
Before work from the left side



After work. It has moved considerably towards the front

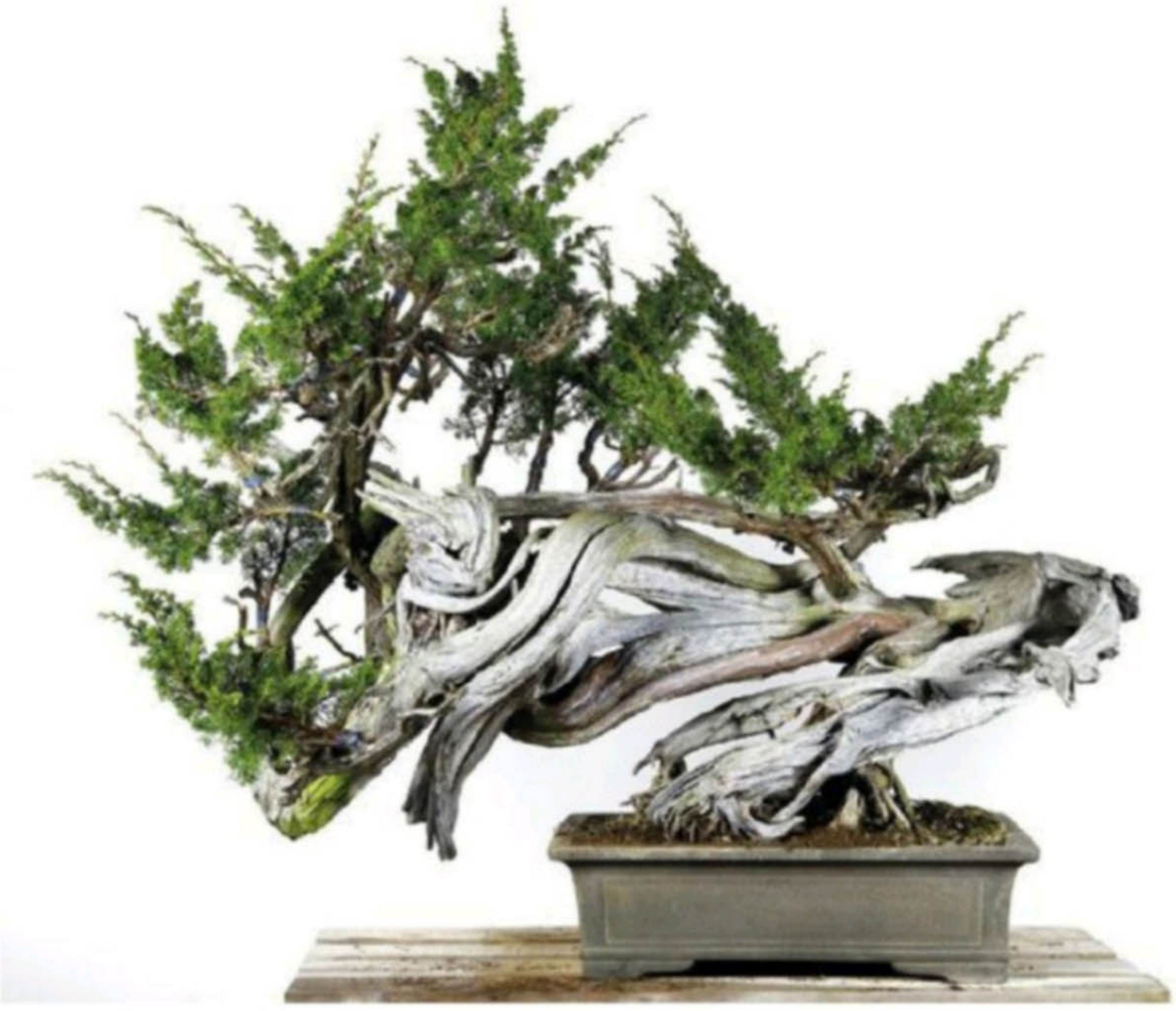
The base of the lower trunk before work





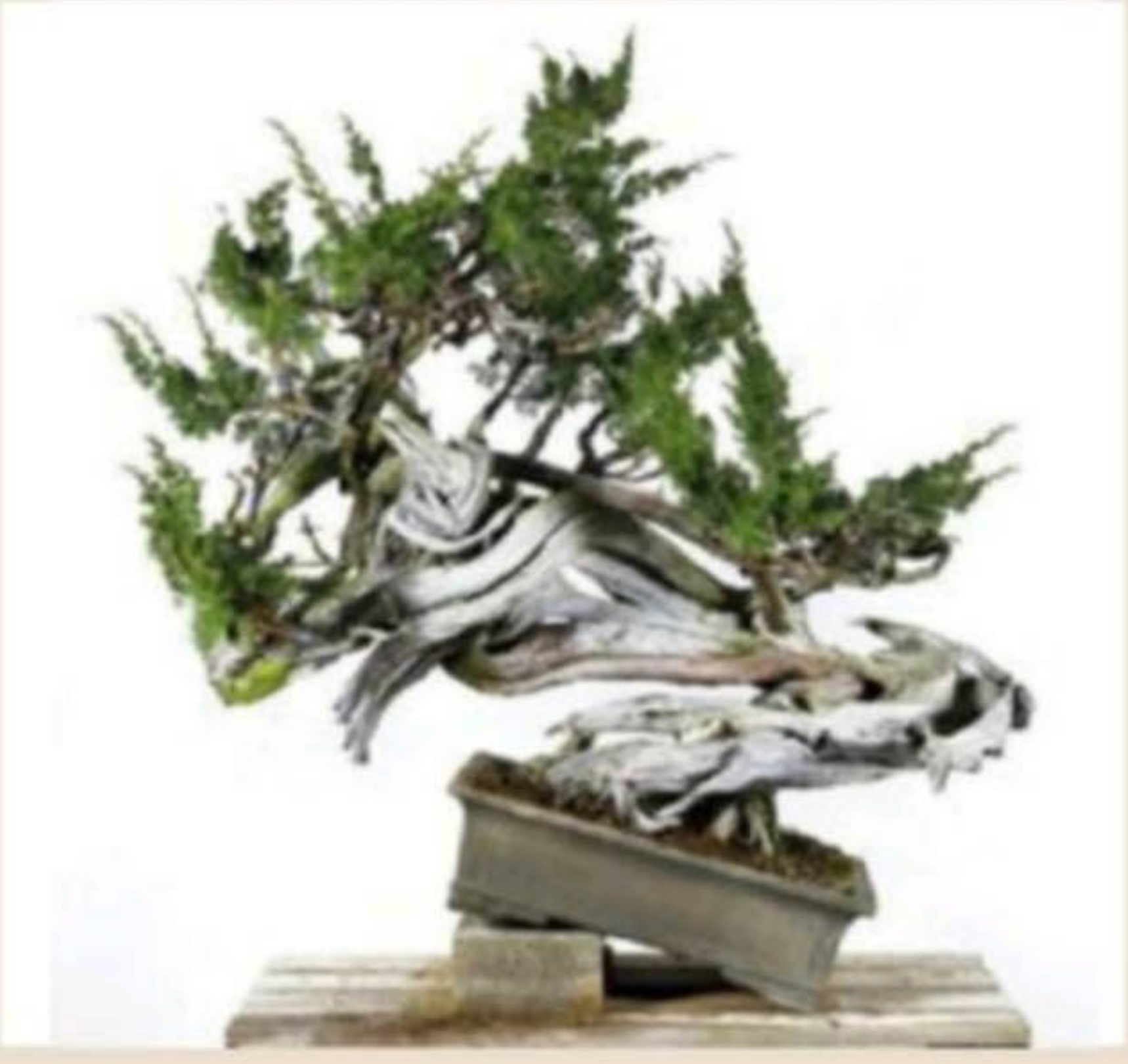
After the trunk has been bent. The weak-looking lower trunk now has the appearance of a powerful deadwood trunk with a much more stable and dramatic feel

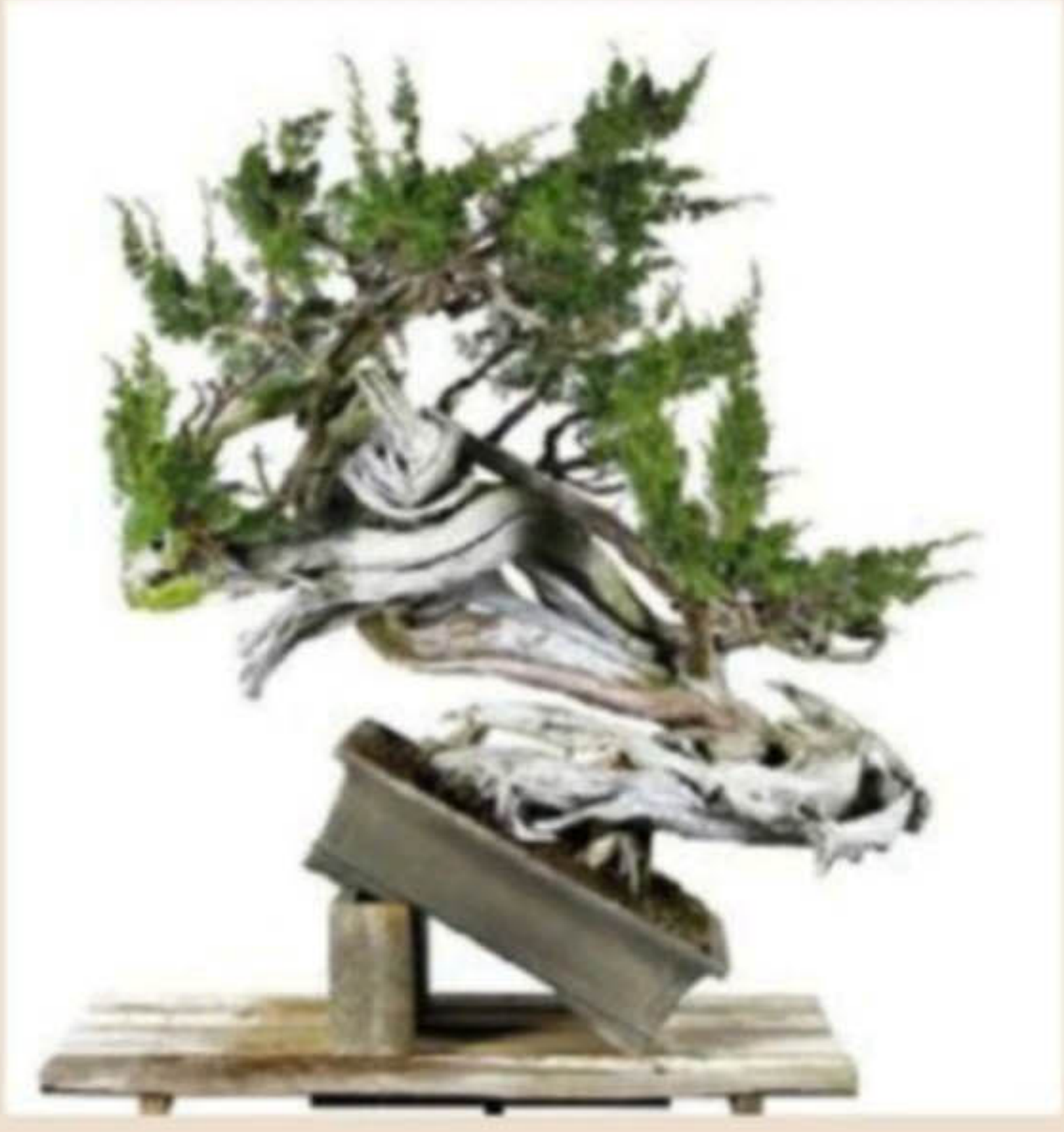
After trunk bending


Here you can see the whole tree after trunk bending

What to do with the angle of the trunk?

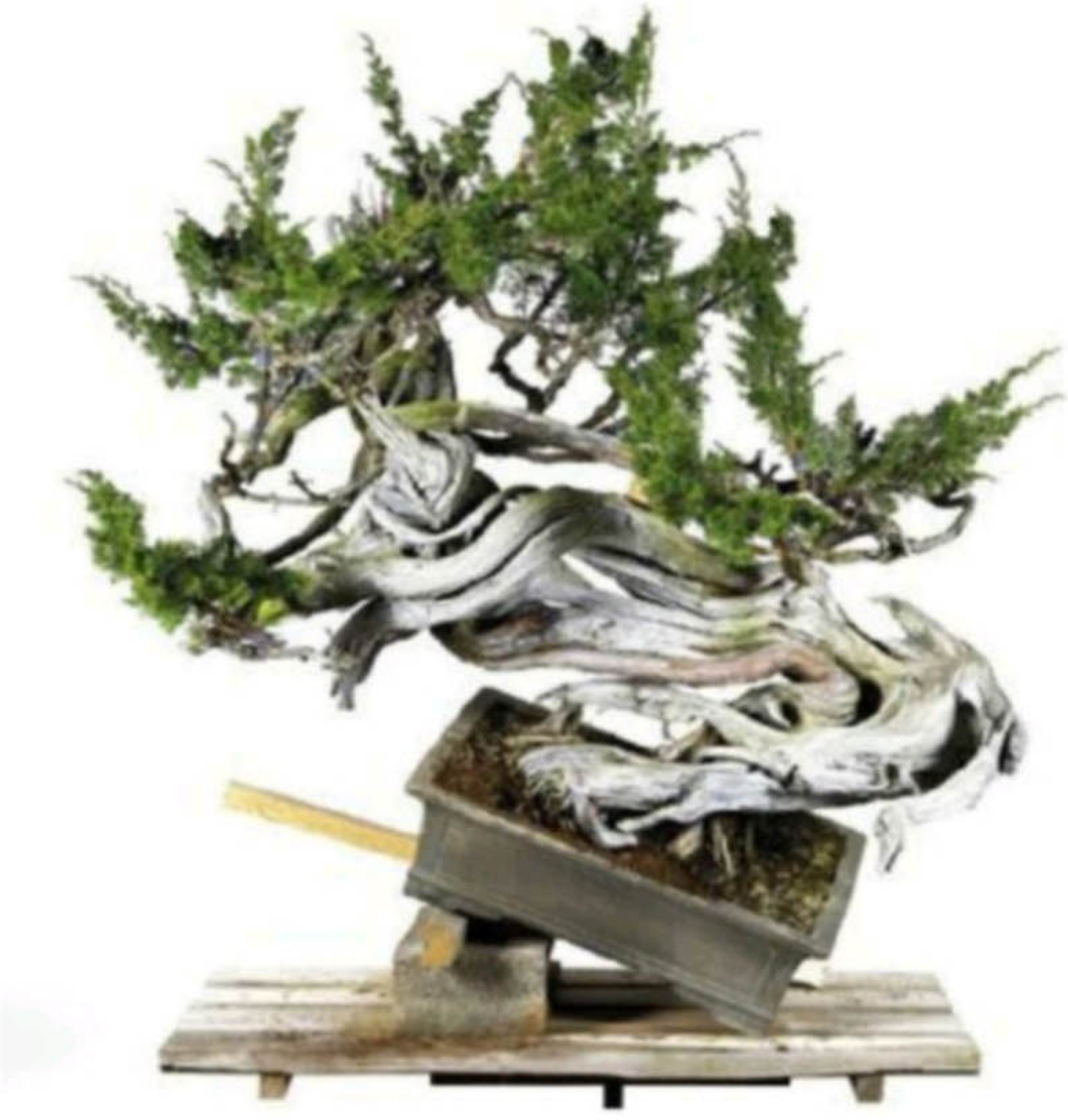
From the beginning of the work, Mr Kimura had two rough ideas in mind: an upright tree, or slanting trunk. After completing the trunk bending process, he compared the two options. Even a subtle difference in angle altered the nuances of the shari (exposed deadwood).

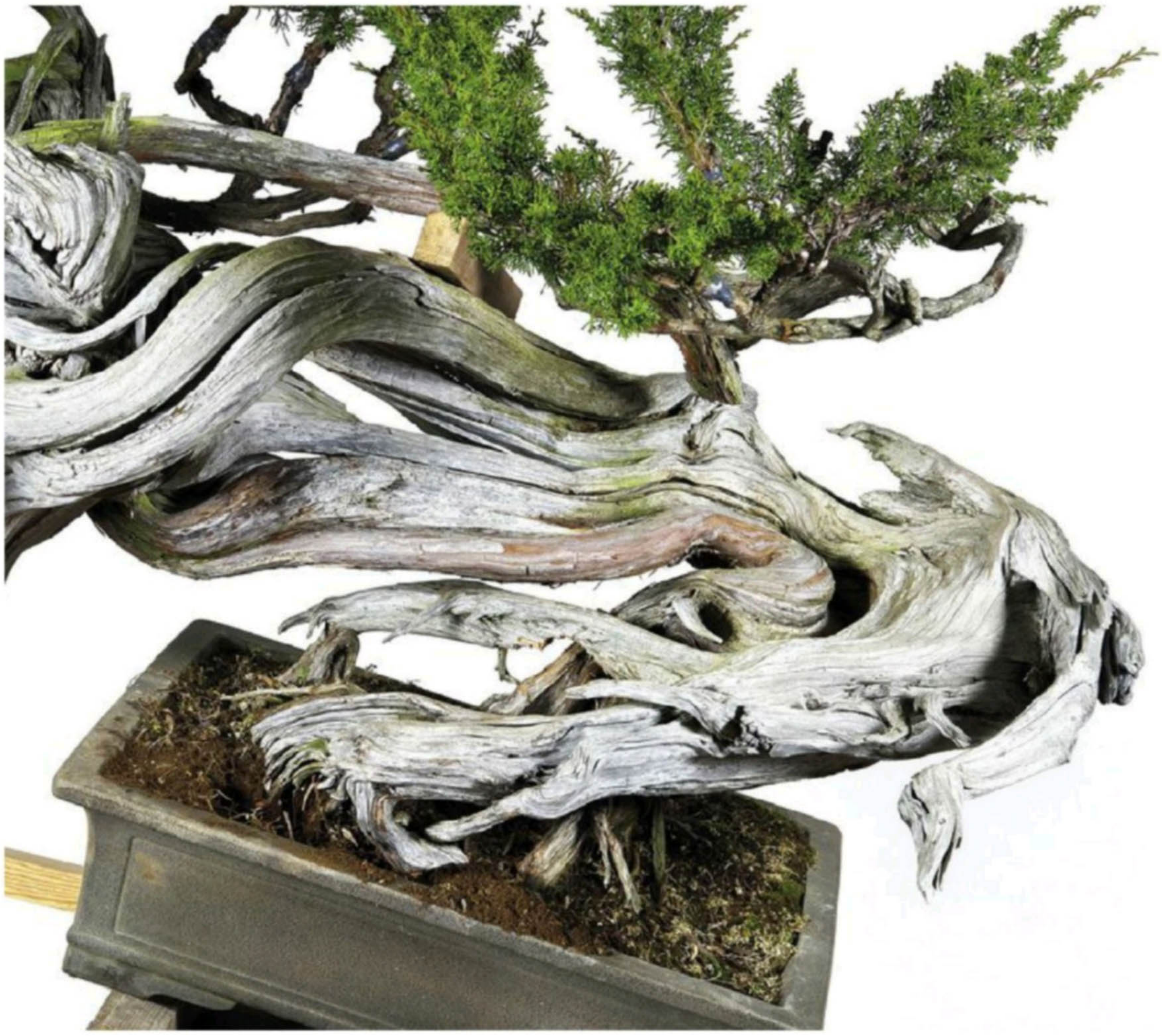

The first idea of lifting up the trunk on the left side


While the second possibility involves raising it up even further

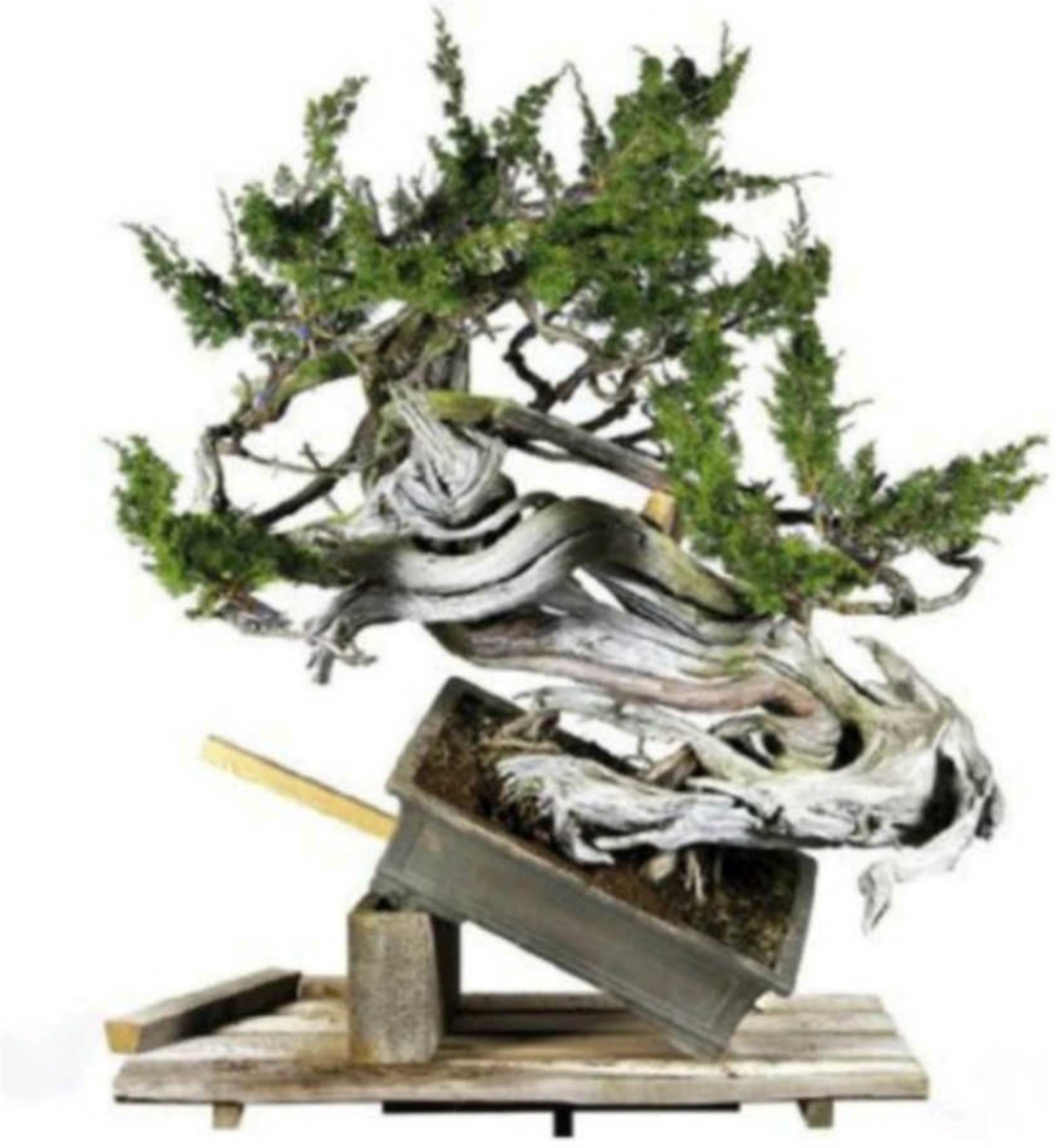
The entire pot is lifted towards the front!

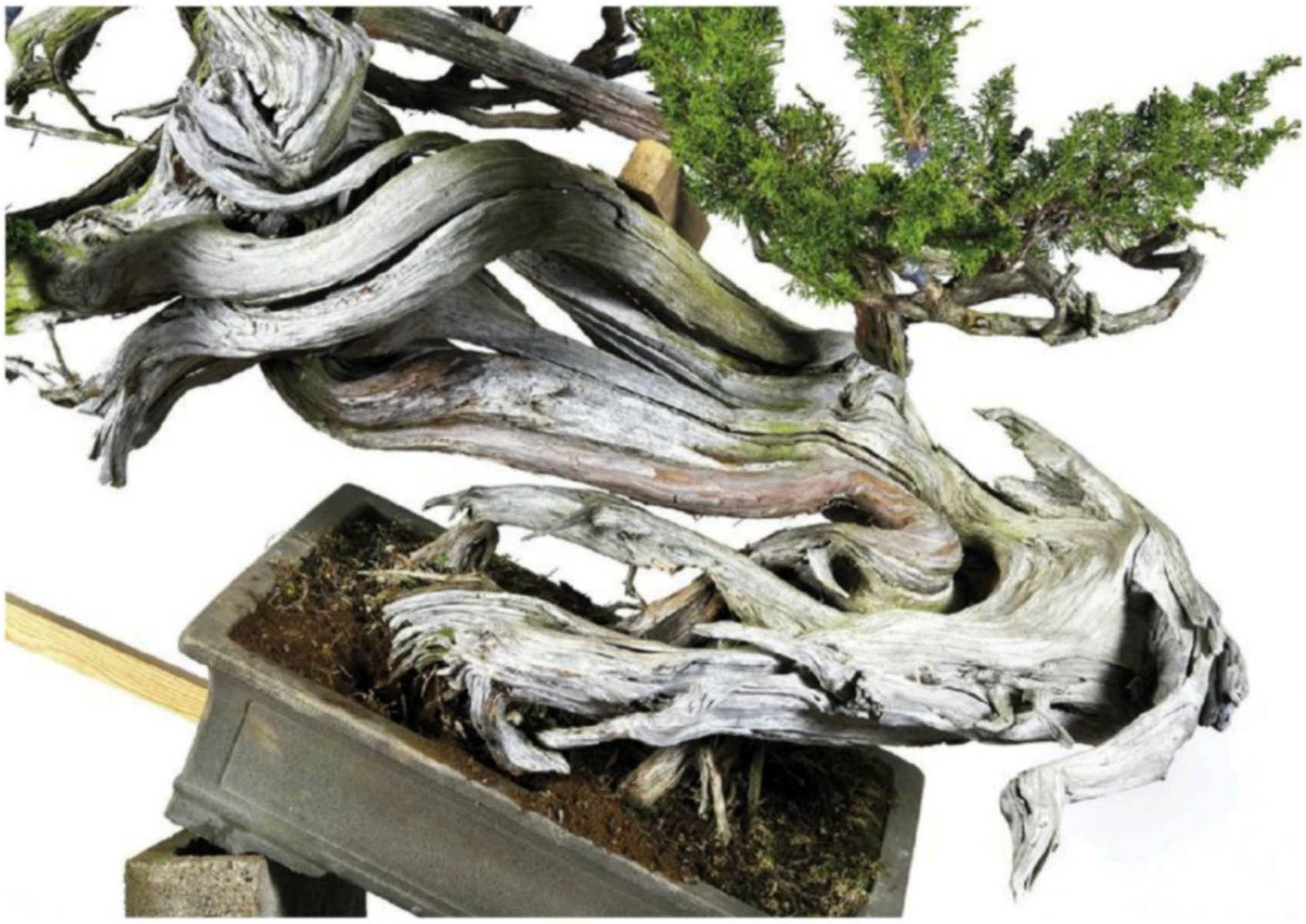
The tree will also be lifted towards the front as well as being raised up on the left-hand side. This maximises the impact and width of the deadwood section in the middle of the trunk.





Tilt it even further to the right!





After carefully examining the movement of the wide board-like ita-shari, Mr Kimura adjusted the height of the blocks and tilted the trunk even further to the right. He chose the image of an upright tree that would make the ita-shari appear lighter. This position was decided as the new front and angle

Styling the right and back branches

With the new front decided, Mr Kimura proceeded to the shaping work: branch bending and wiring

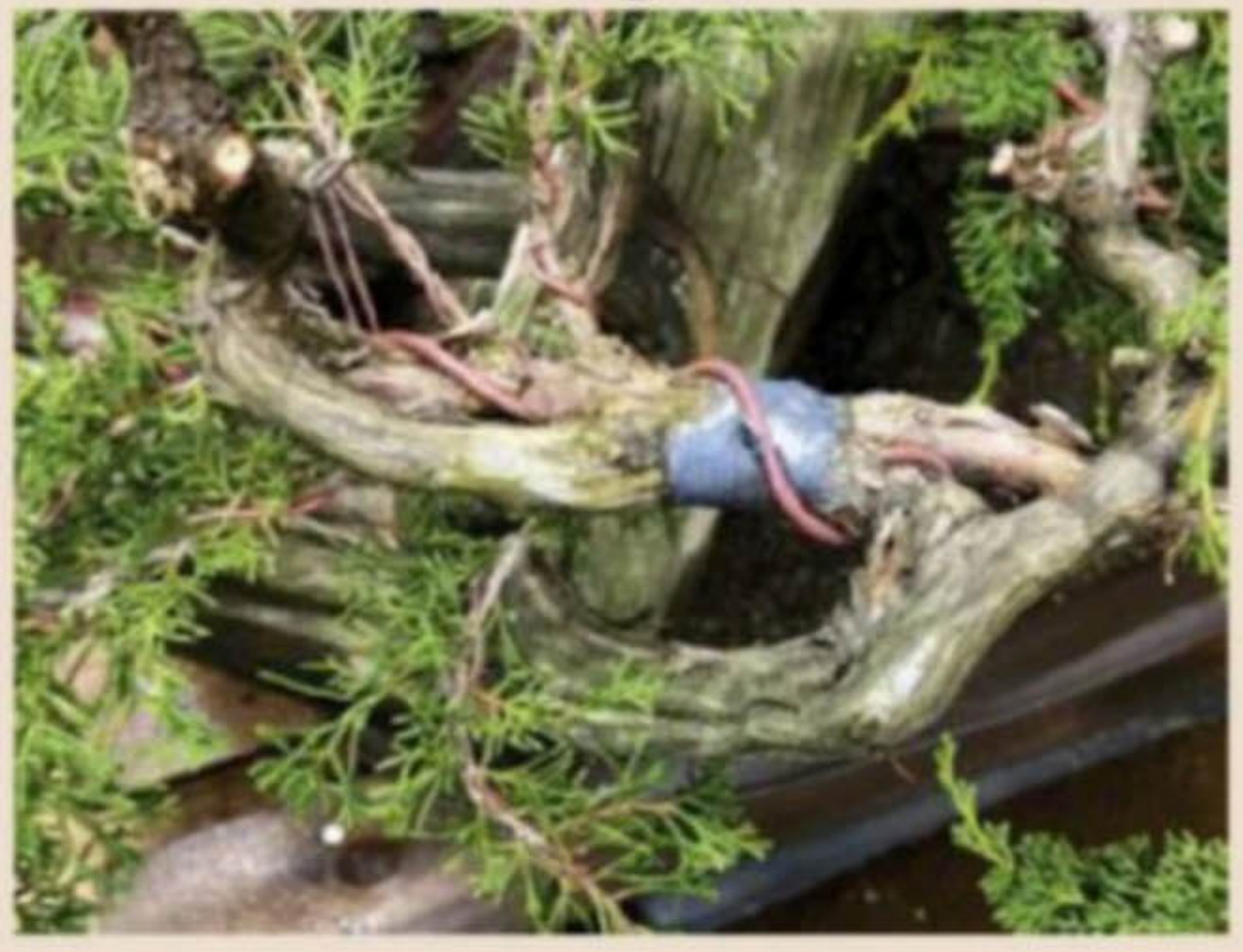
The tree has an irregular shape, with branches only on the left of the shari. However, considering the structure of the branches, the foliage itself emphasizes a flow toward the right. Therefore, the right branches will be styled to appear as long as possible, so utilising the foliage to the utmost.
The back branch is repositioned to create a sense of depth without interfering with the character of the shari. The styling then continues with the left branch, which serves as the defining character branch, and the apex, which is to be compactly arranged.

An iron bar is used to lower the back branch. It involves three people to hold the pot securely

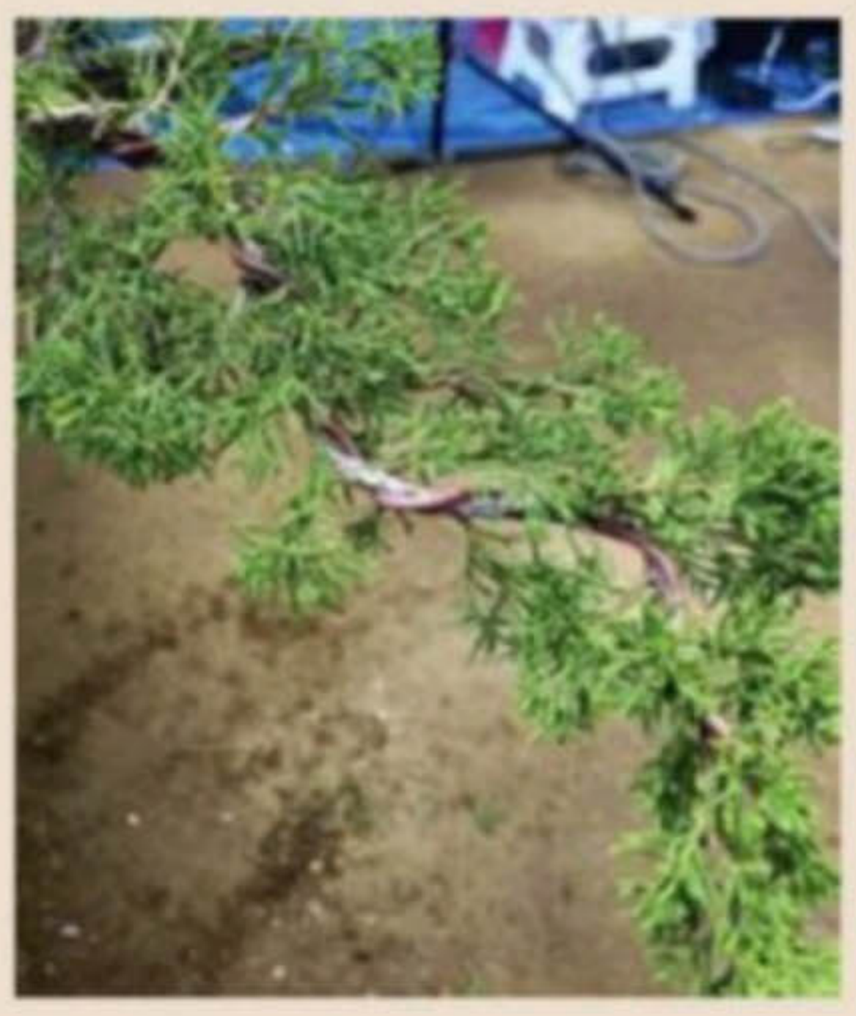
Rubber and a 17-gauge copper wire is used to pull the branch down and fix to the shari at the base. It has been pulled down to face in the opposite direction

The back branch is then wired to give it the final desired shape

Unique wiring technique



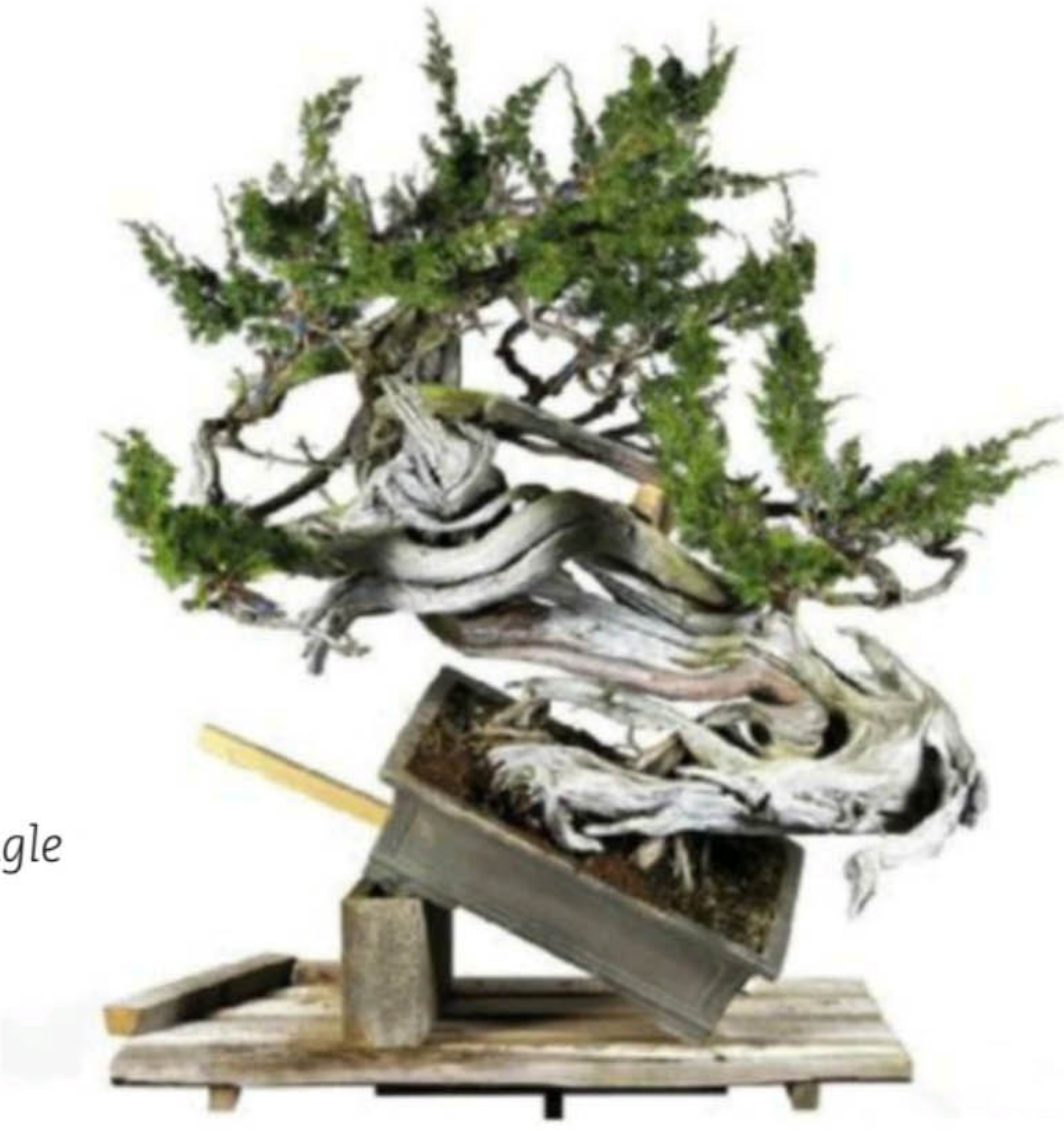
As it has been grafted recently, the branches are individual and there are no pairs of close branches that can be wired together easily. As a result. the branches are wired individually with one piece of thick wire that has enough strength to be effective by itself



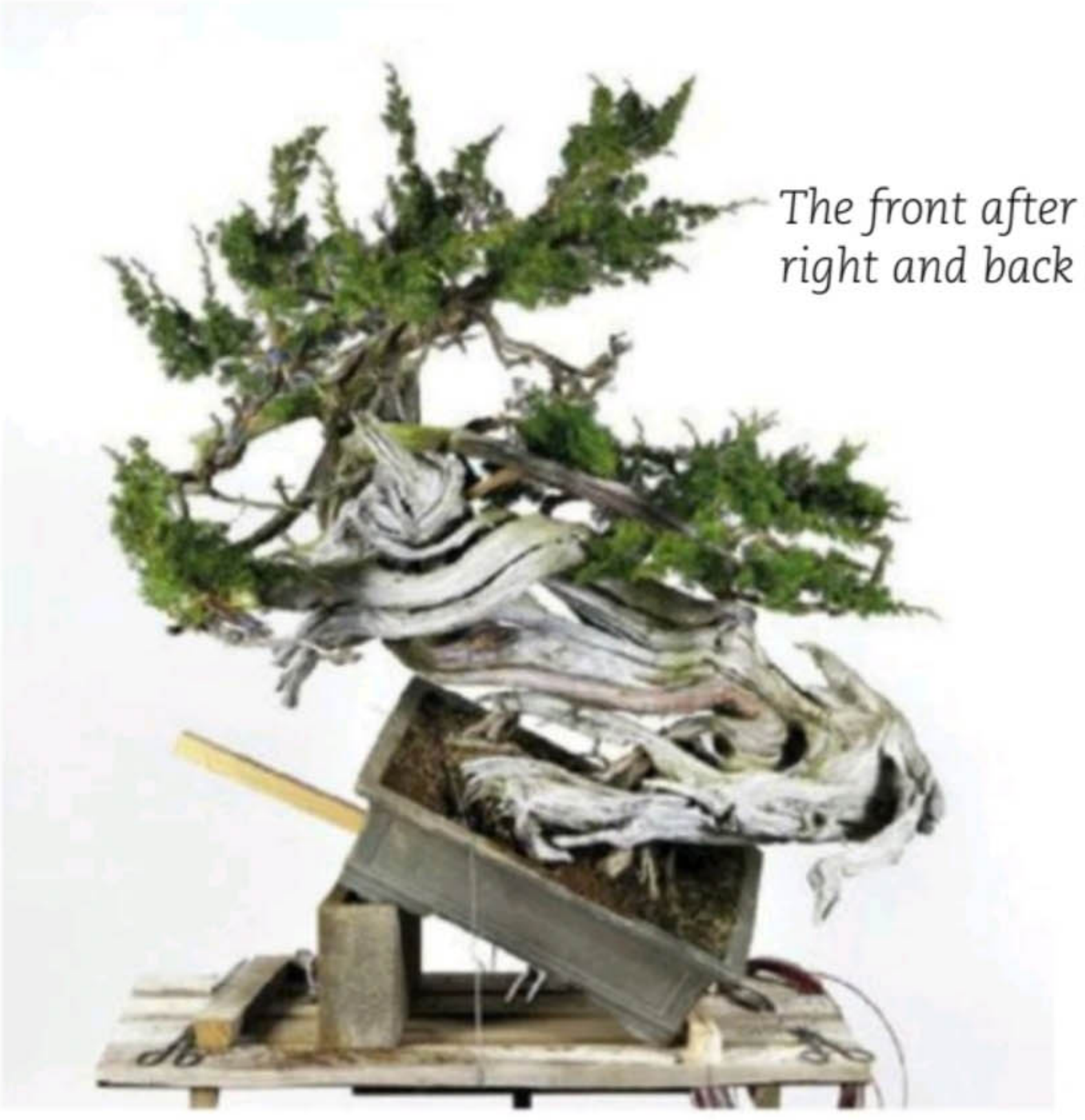
As the secondary branches gets closer and closer, the pitch of the wire becomes tighter

Mr Kimura applying wire to this natural yamadori juniper

Styling the apex and left side branches

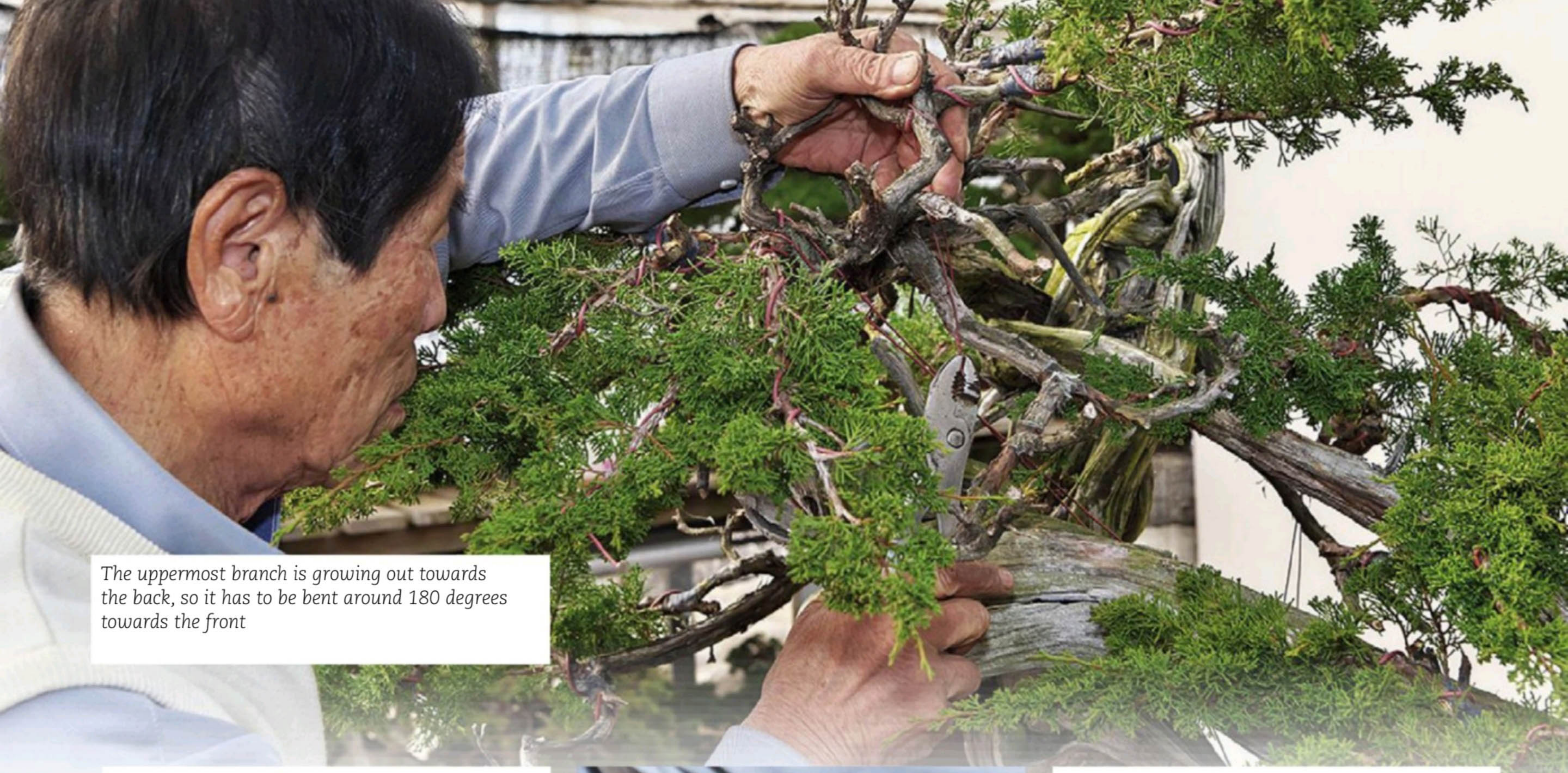


The front after the angle change

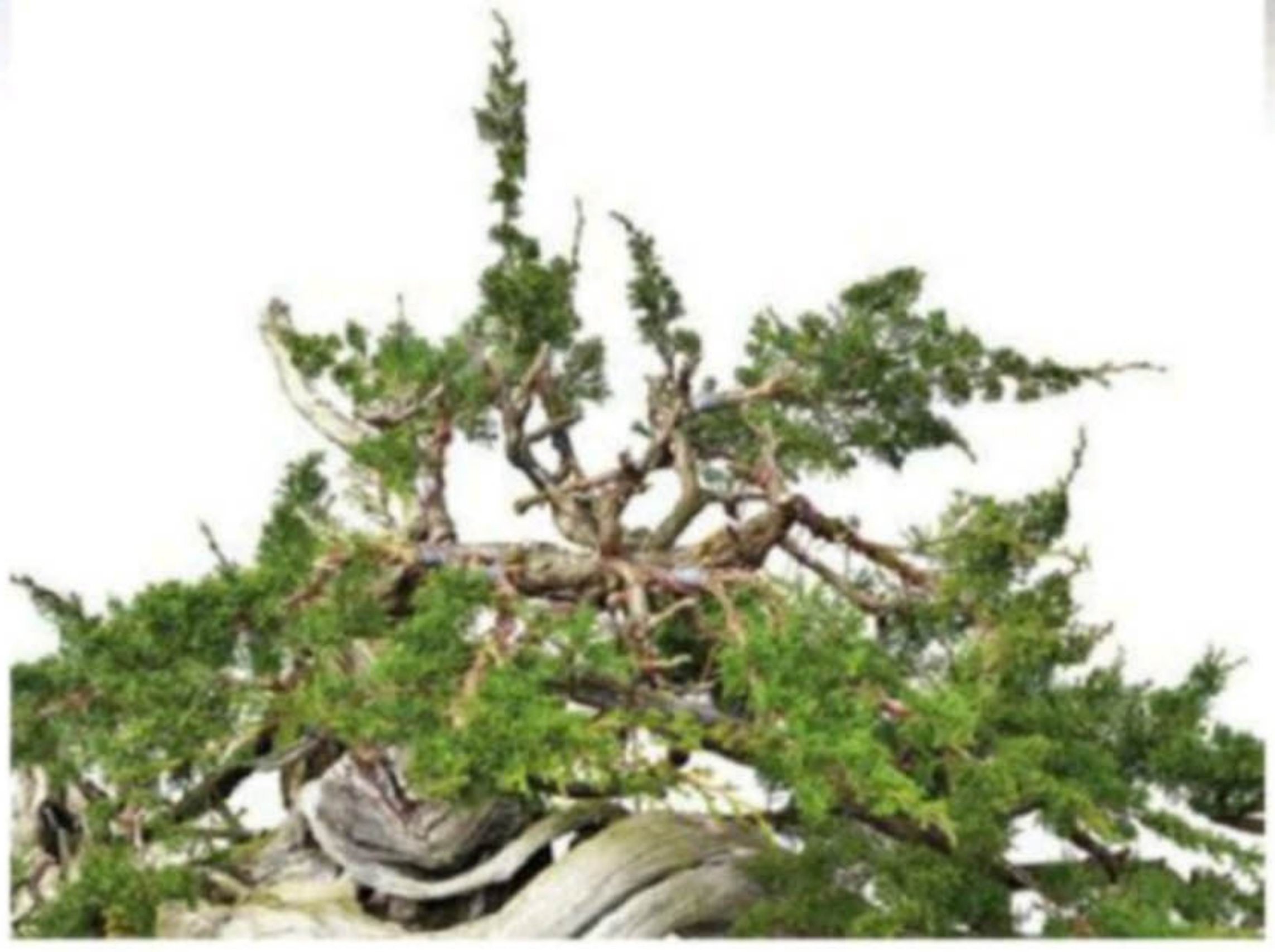


The front after the initial styling of the right and back branches

The work continues up into the apex. A vertically-growing branch will be used, initially bending it down to the right-hand side, then around in an anti-clockwise direction

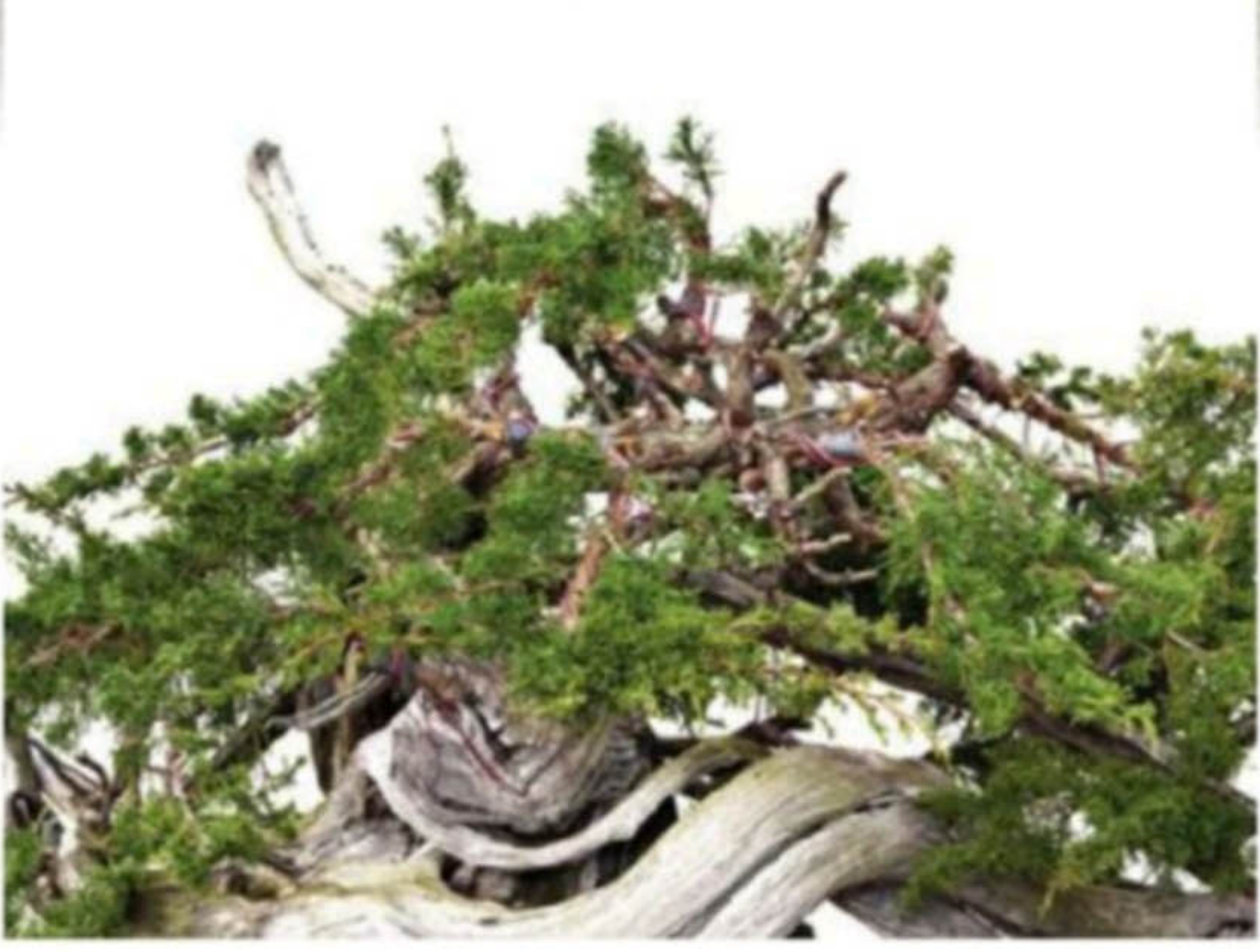


The uppermost branch is growing out towards the back, so it has to be bent around 180 degrees towards the front



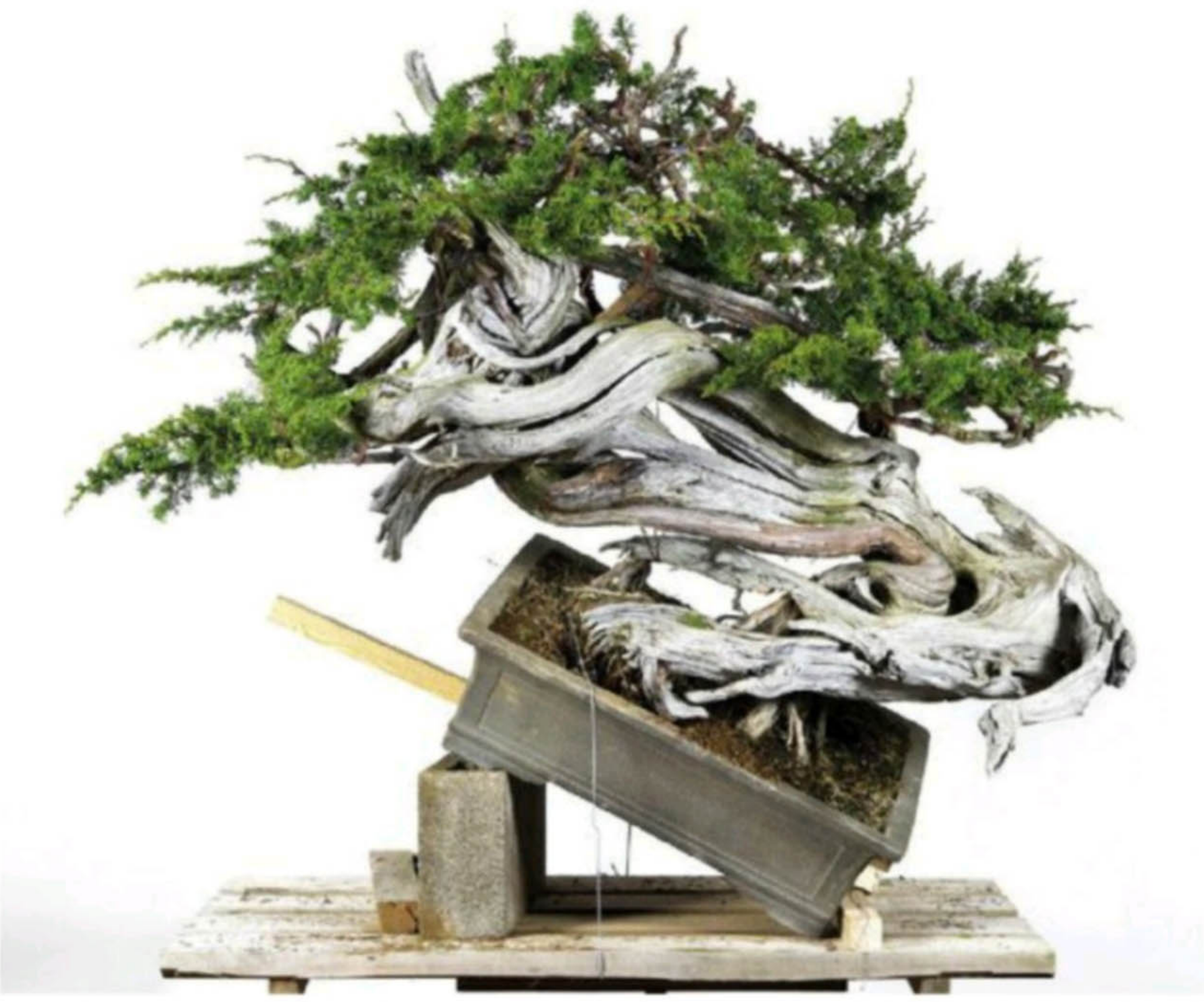
The apex before manipulating the branch. There is not much space between branches

Multiple branch adjustments were repeated, with the work proceeding smoothly and skilfully

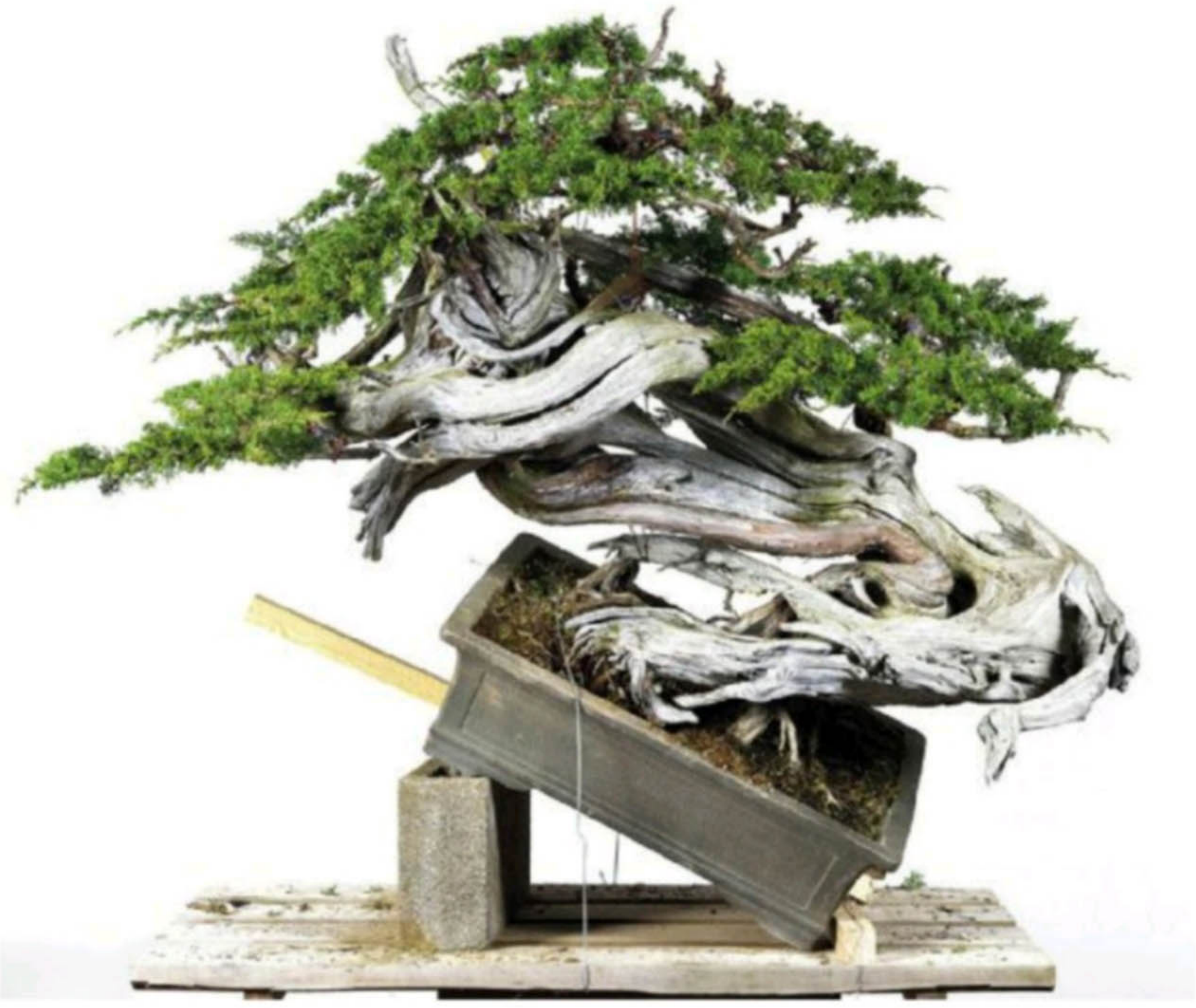


The apex after the work, compactly arranged while retaining a sufficient amount of foliage

The overall appearance after the initial rough wiring of the left branch and crown



The overall appearance after the detailed shaping of the fine branches



Repotting to complete the styling

Removed from the pot

It has not been repotted for some time and there are plenty of roots

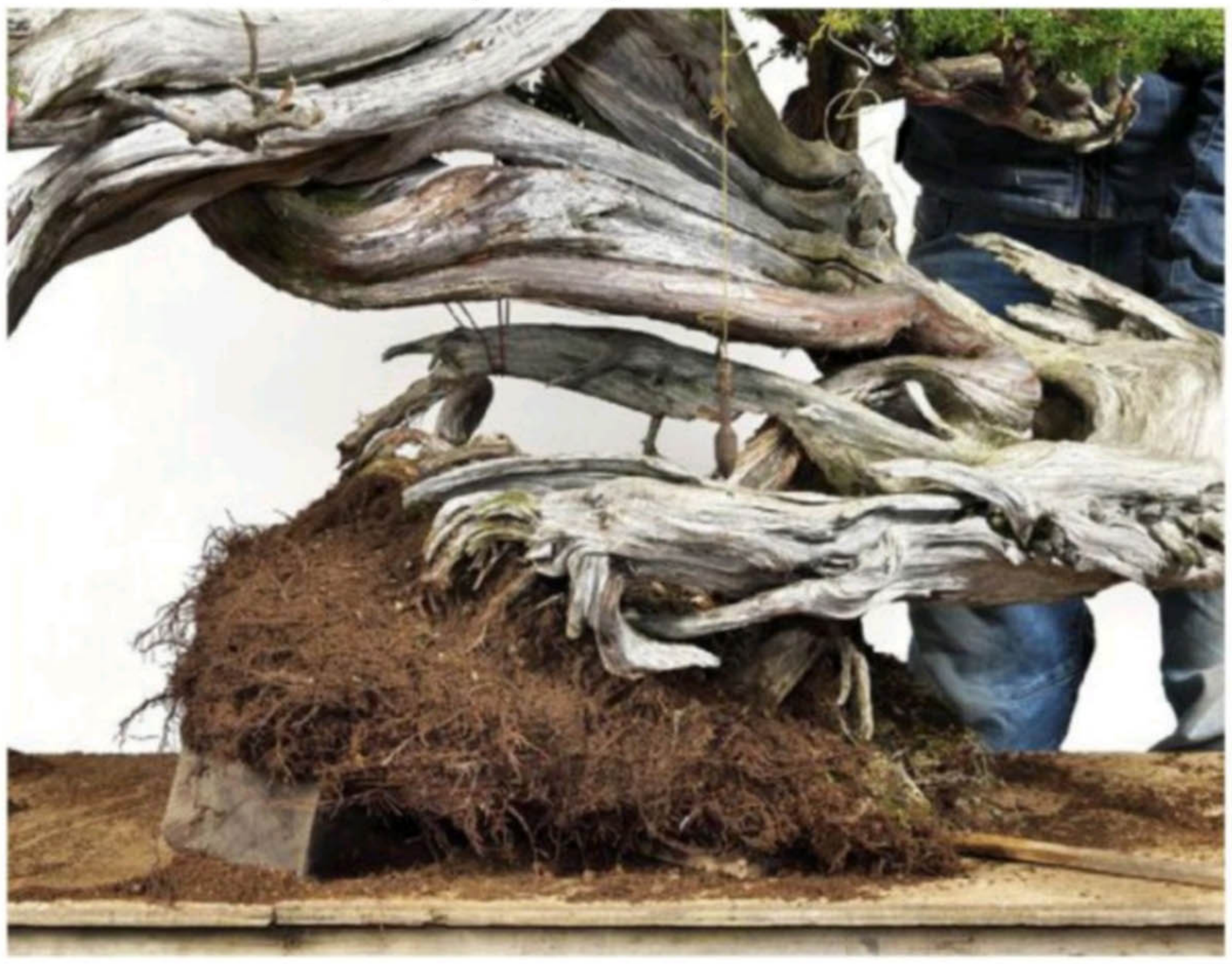
The base of the root ball is the first to be broken down. The condition of the roots is good

A root hook is used to remove the old soil and a large amount of the root ball is cut off

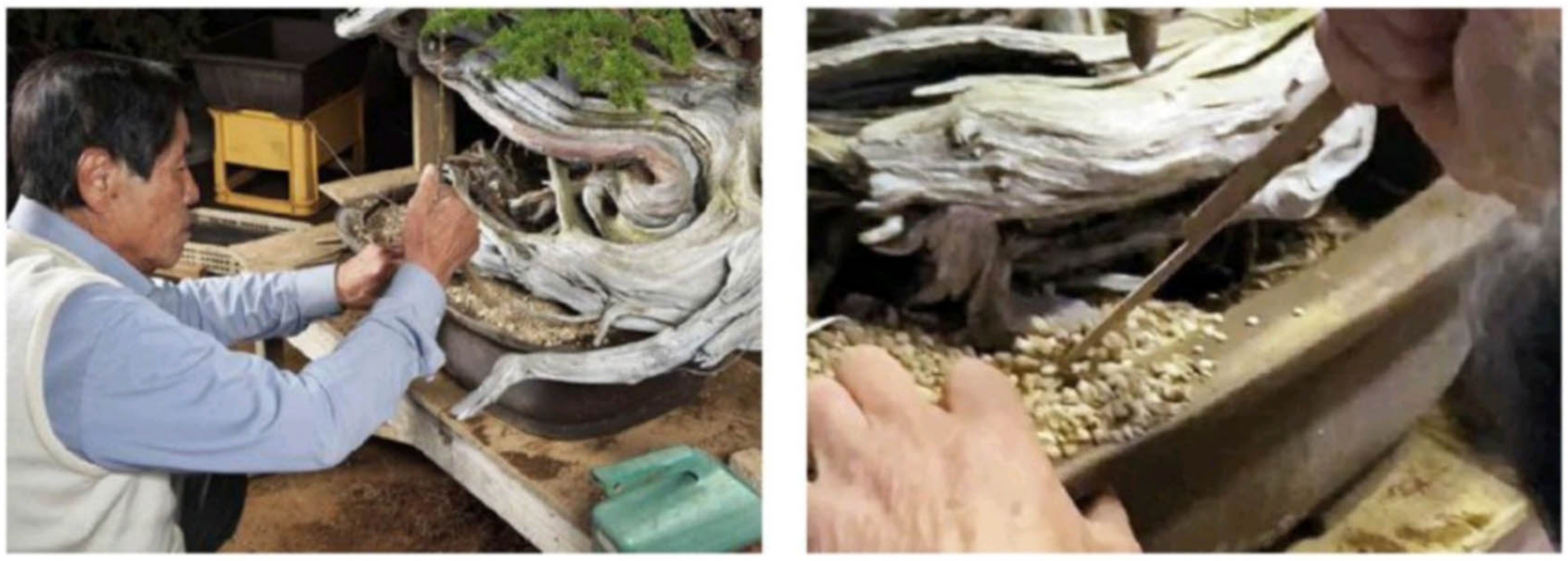
A large sheet of mesh is found inside the root ball

In order to compact the root ball further, some large roots must be removed

The root ball has been reduced in size dramatically. Due to the change in angle there will be some roots protruding from the ground. The soil around these is reduced and they are pulled together with wire



Carefully positioning the tree, while precisely checking the planting angle using the weight's position. Since the back was raised significantly, adjustments were made by shaping the soil accordingly



Soil is added and worked in to eliminate any gaps. Mr Kimura uses a bamboo skewer that has been shaped at the tip, making it easier to reach tight spaces

Chopped sphagnum moss is spread over the surface, followed by thorough watering so as to complete the repotting

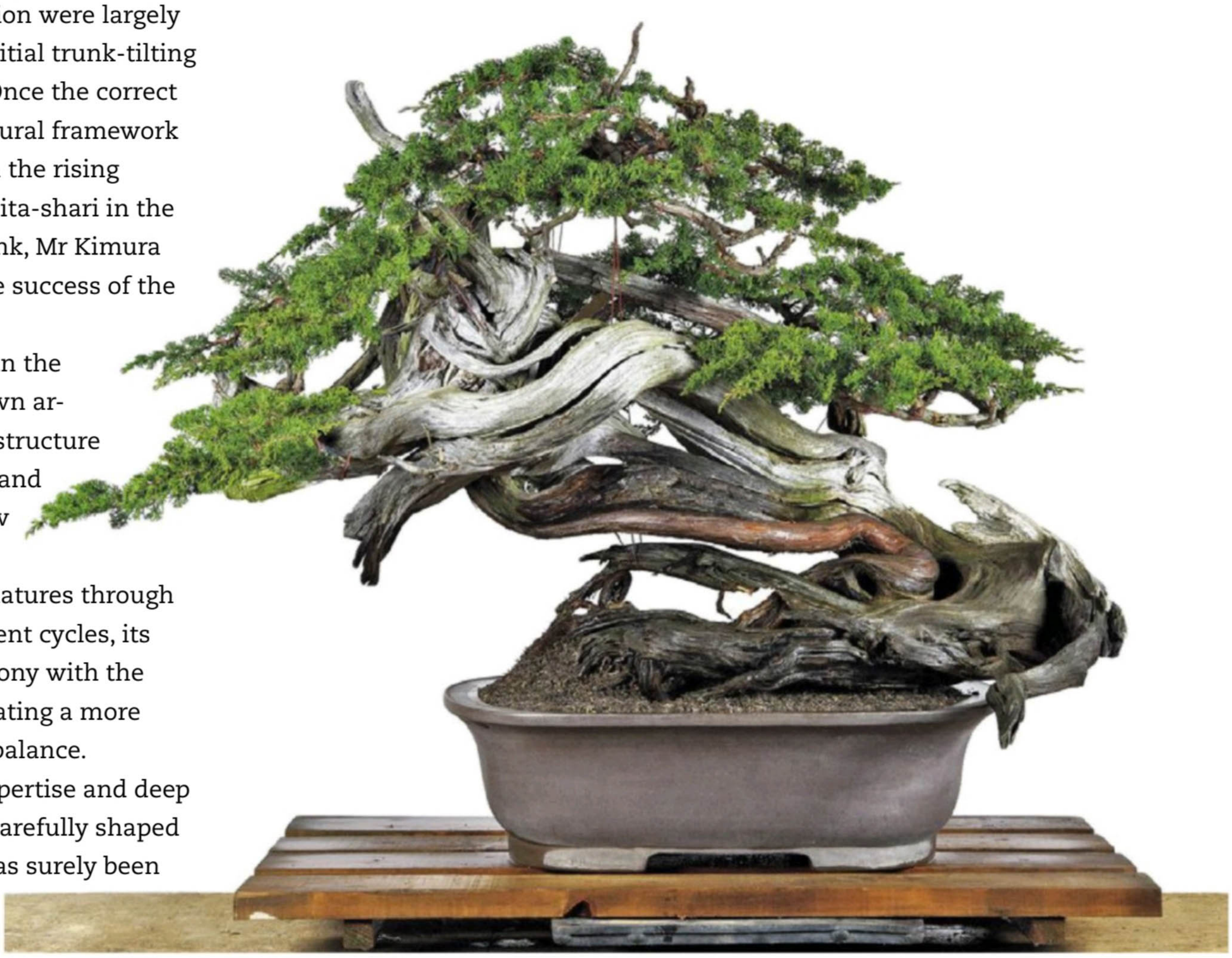
Auction piece becomes a new Shimpaku masterpiece

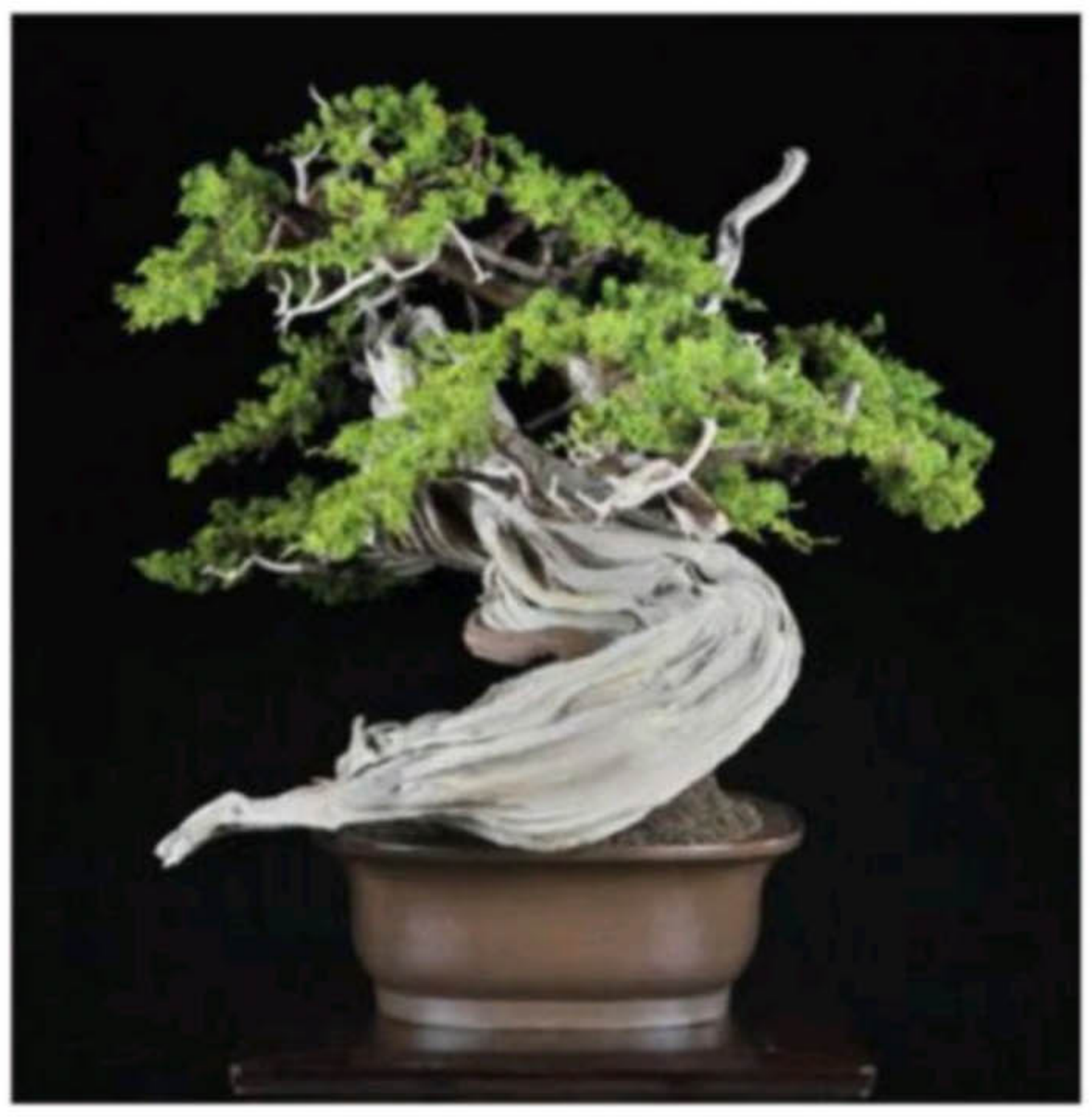
Looking back, the key aspects of this stunning transformation were largely determined during the initial trunk-tilting and angle adjustments. Once the correct planting angle and structural framework was set to showcase both the rising shari at the base and the ita-shari in the middle section of the trunk, Mr Kimura likely felt confident in the success of the project.

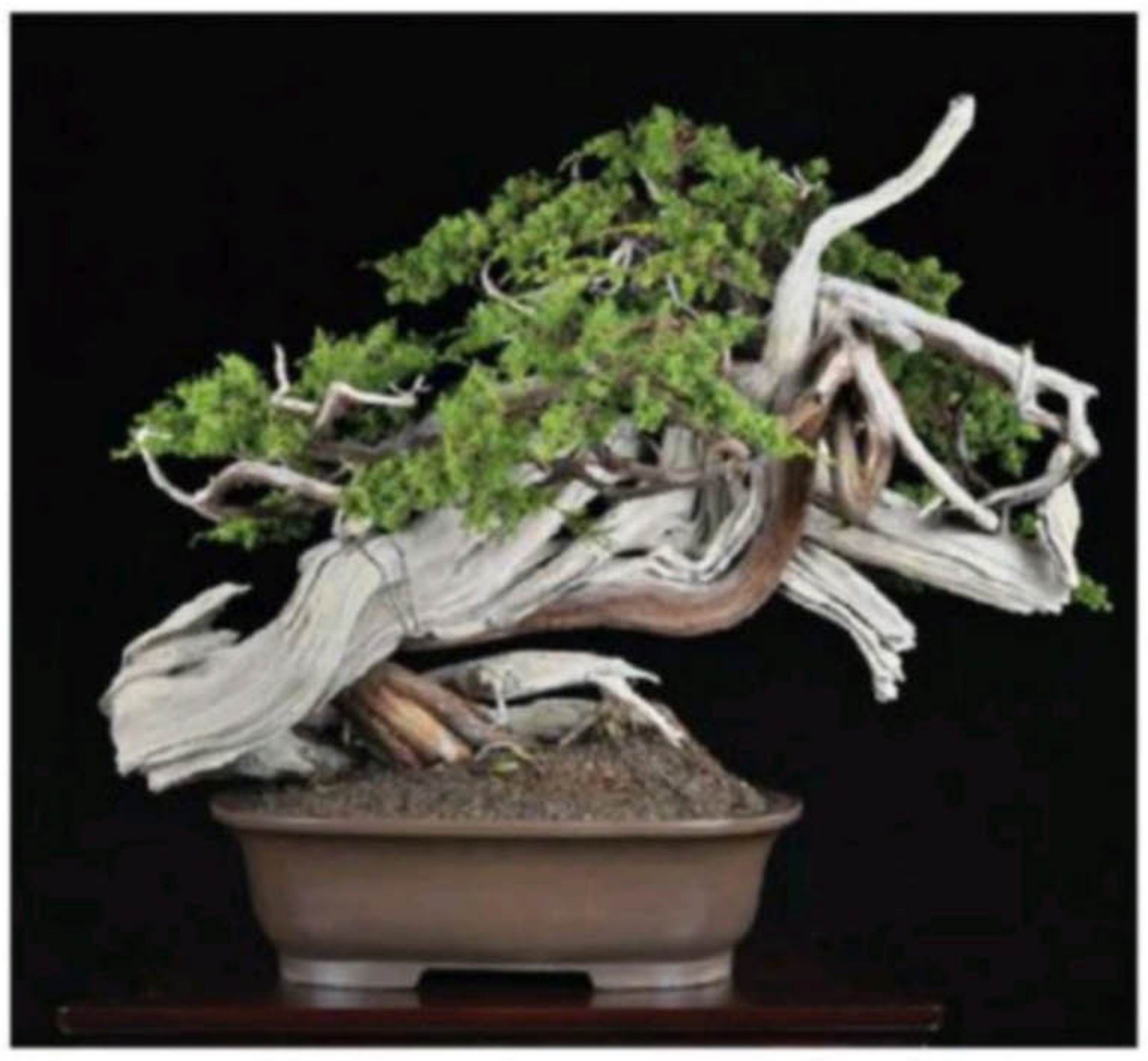
There was no hesitation in the branch placement or crown arrangement. For now, the structure was designed to be open and dynamic, in order to allow the inner branches to strengthen. As the tree matures through one or two more refinement cycles, its foliage will grow in harmony with the powerful shari trunk, creating a more mature and appropriate balance.

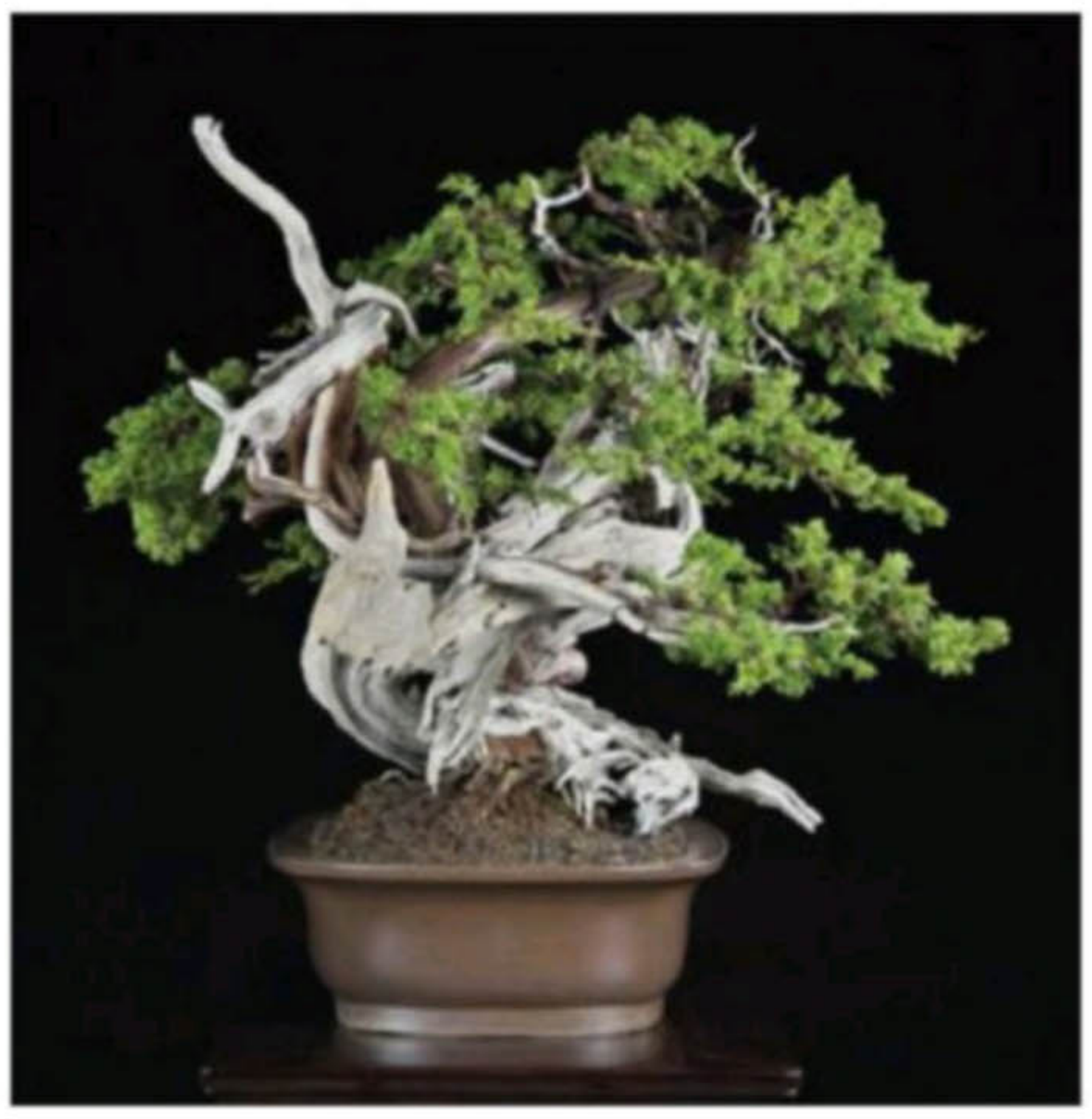
Through his seasoned expertise and deep passion, Mr Kimura has carefully shaped and refined this tree; it has surely been the birth of a new masterpiece.

After repotting is complete. Today's work concludes here, with fine detailing of each branch to follow

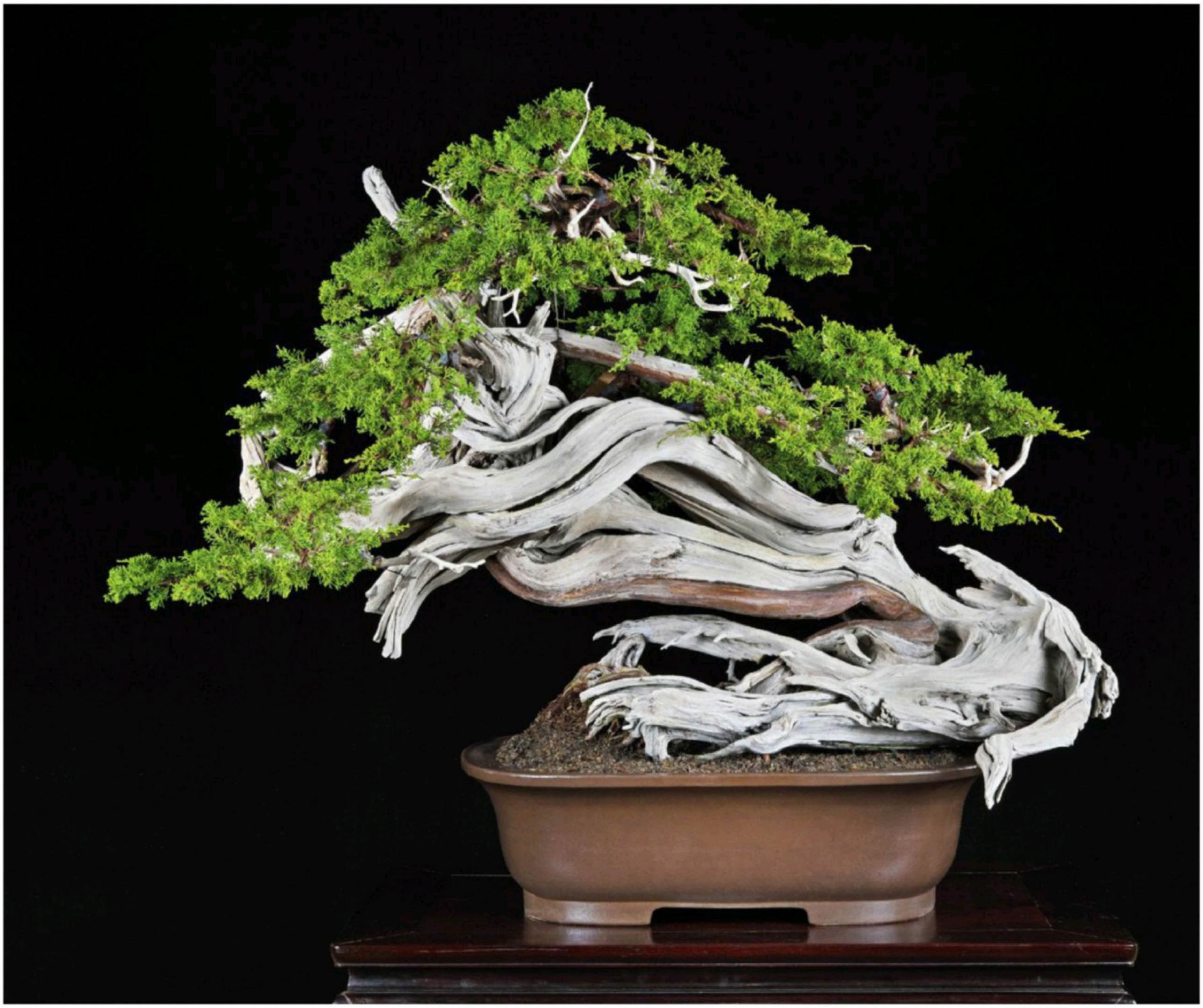


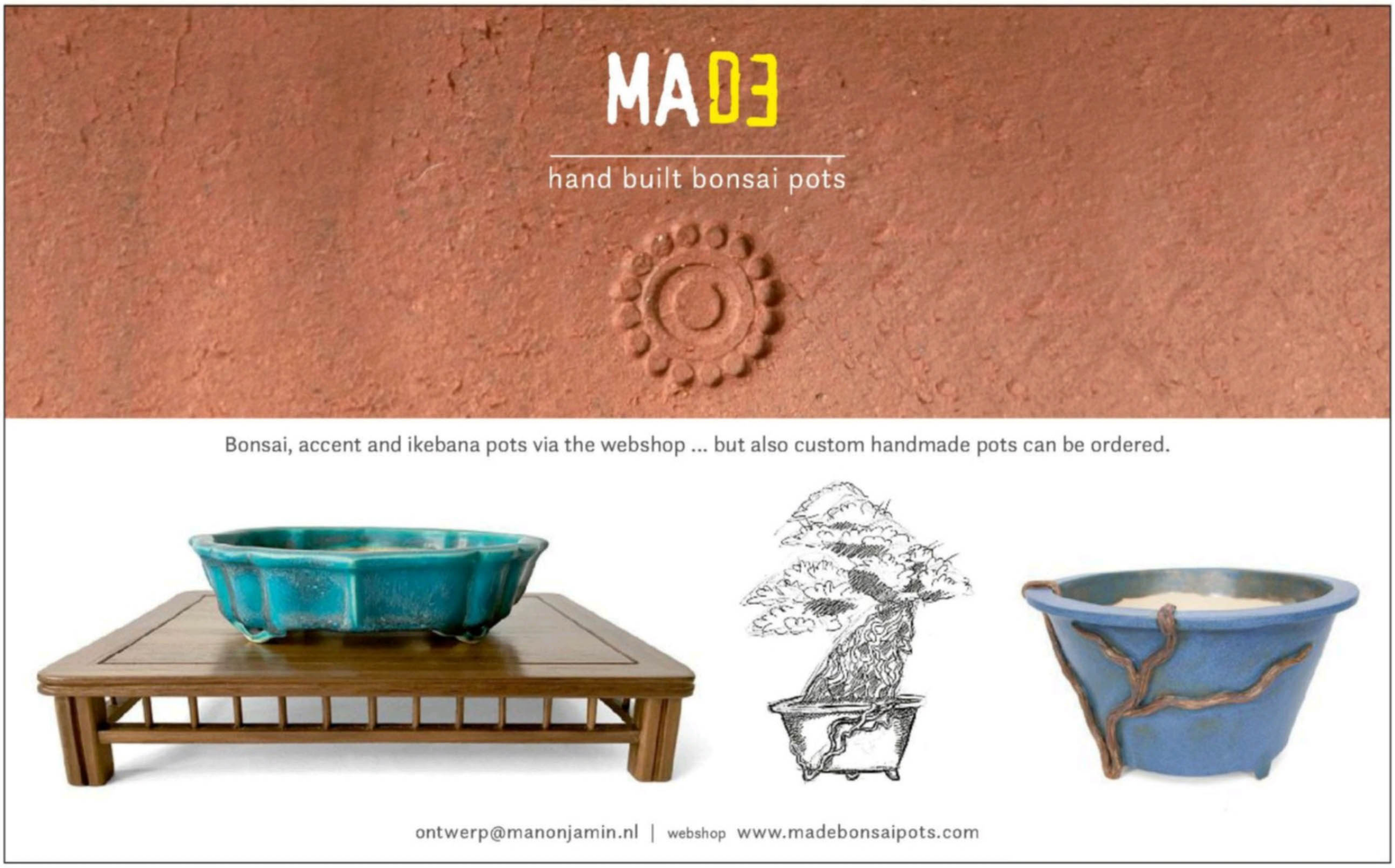

Final image seen from the right-hand side


As seen from the rear


And from the left

Ten days after the work, final photographs were taken following fine adjustments to the small branches, cleaning and finishing of the deadwood. Given the grandeur of the shari trunk, the left and right branches were not overly compacted, but instead styled with a natural, flowing appearance





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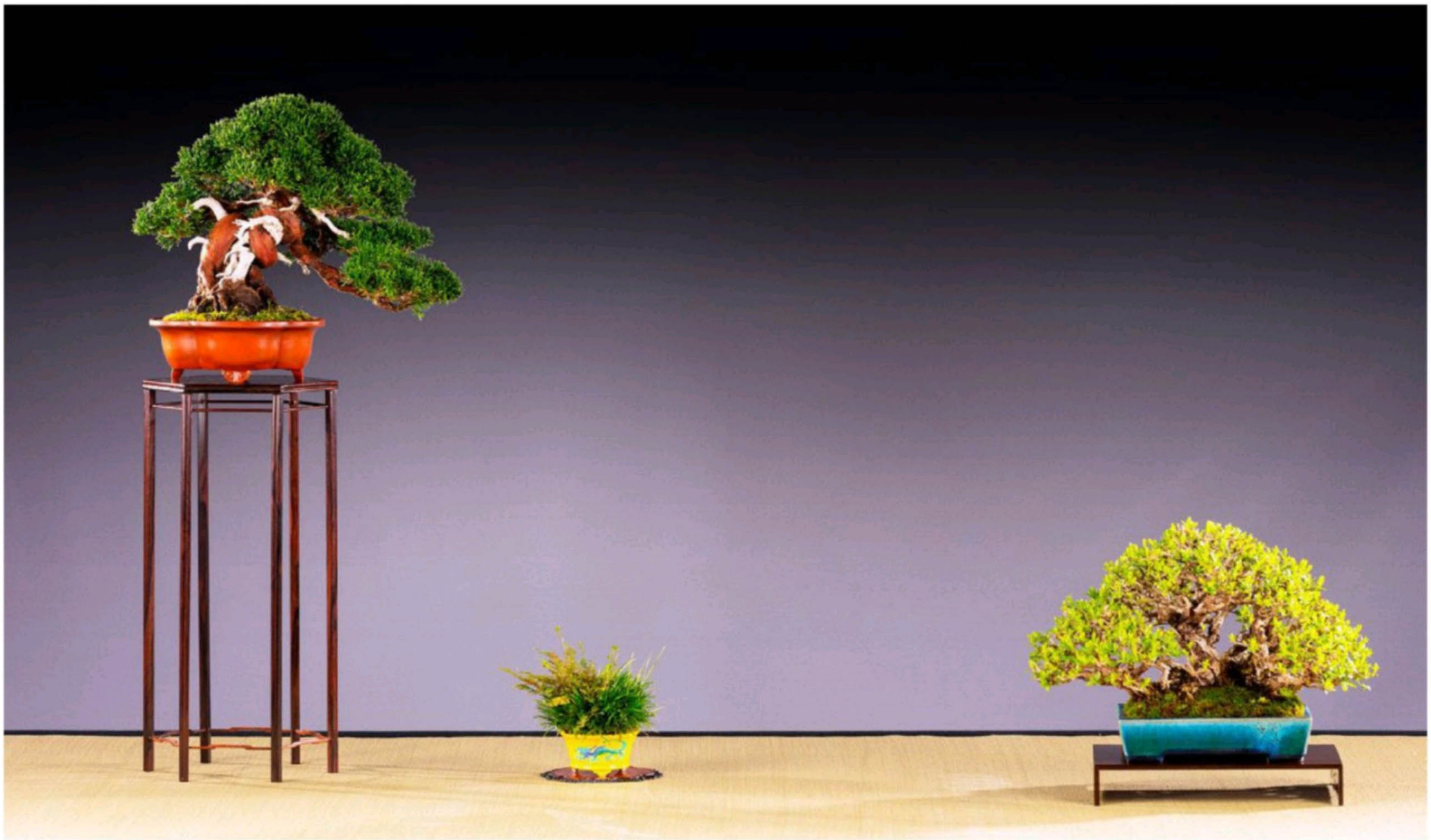


Shohin: Juniperus chinensis 'Itoigawa', Ligustrum obtusifolium 'Arakawa'
Ritta Cooper

Photo: Jörg Derlien

A fine bunch

How to improve your shohin bonsai

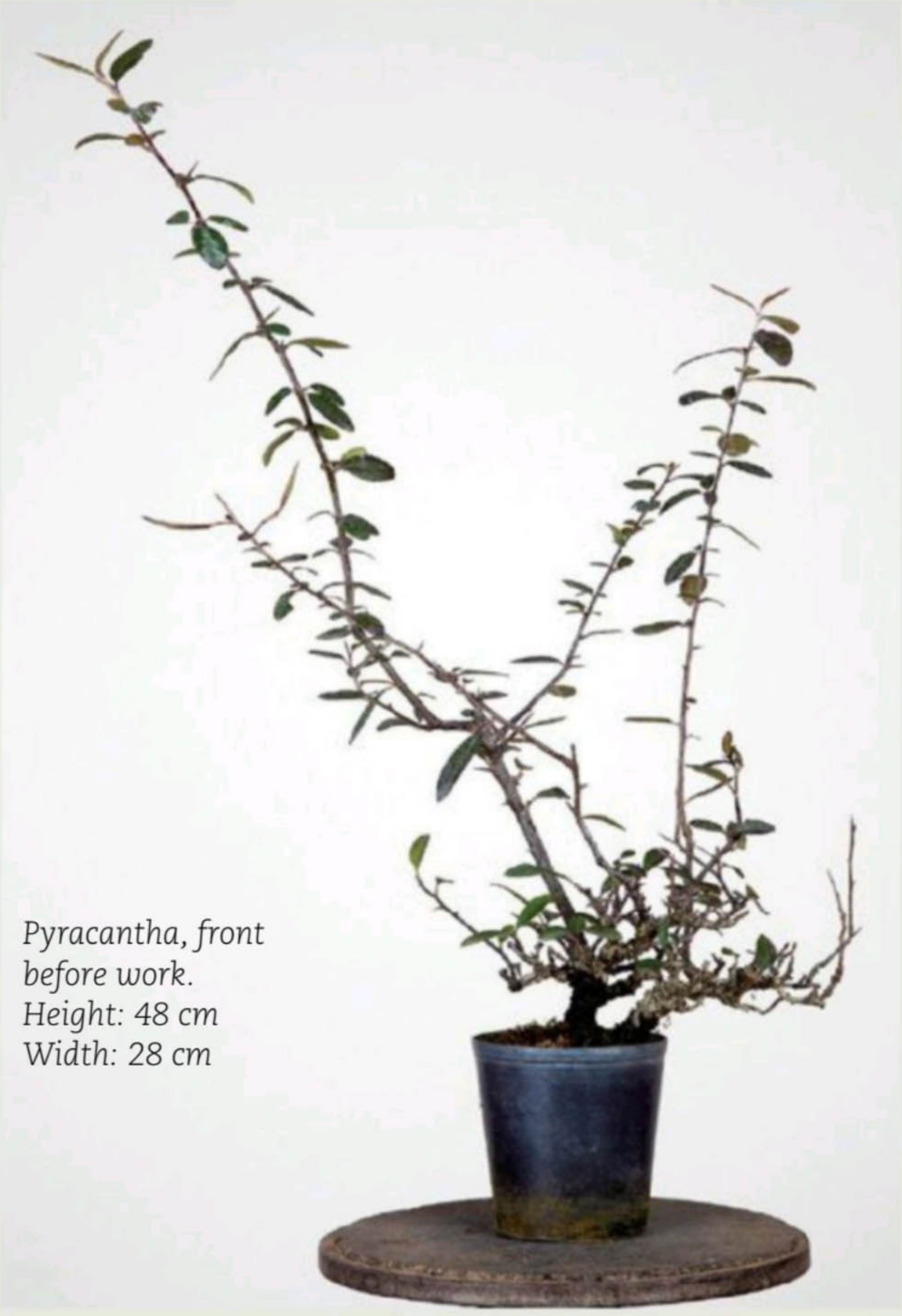
Text and photography: Kinbon, Japan

Harumi Ishii (Ueharu-en) specialises in shohin for which refinement is a key element, so ugly cuts or disordered branch settings need to be addressed. Here he uses pyracantha, dwarf jasmine and *Elaeagnus*, to illustrate how to cope with these problems and how to develop a sense of what the tree will look like in the near future

Pyracantha

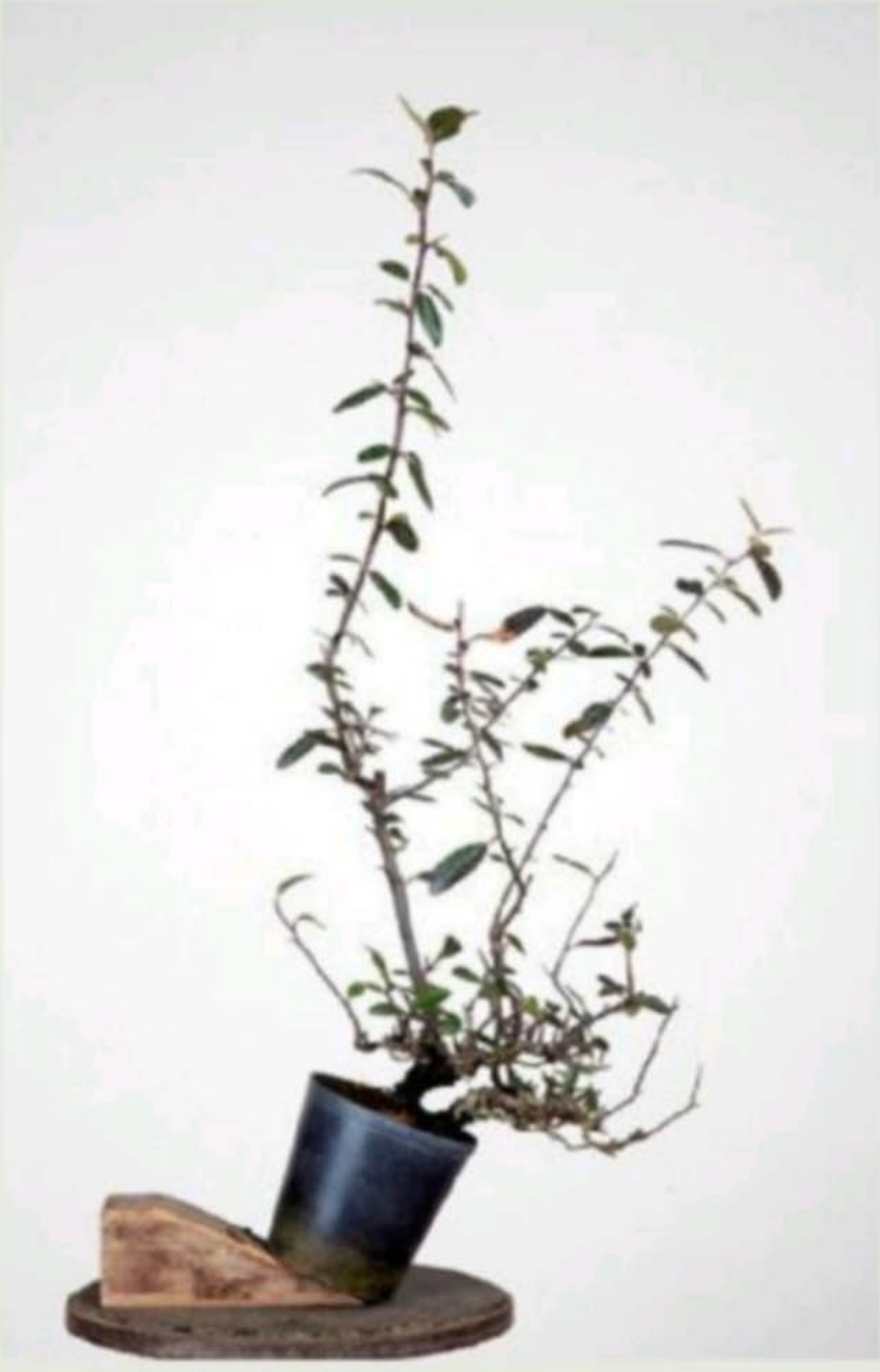
Improving leggy branches that have been pruned insufficiently

The material is a pyracantha with two parallel trunks. It may look like two individual trees, but it is actually a twin trunk that starts from a single base hidden beneath the soil. The left trunk, a candidate for the main trunk, extends straight upwards as the central axis. Both main and secondary trunks, though, have a number of remaining vigorous shoots causing the overall silhouette to expand excessively. To define the structure, the excessively long shoots were first pruned back, and then the balance between the two trunks was carefully evaluated to develop a more refined tree shape.

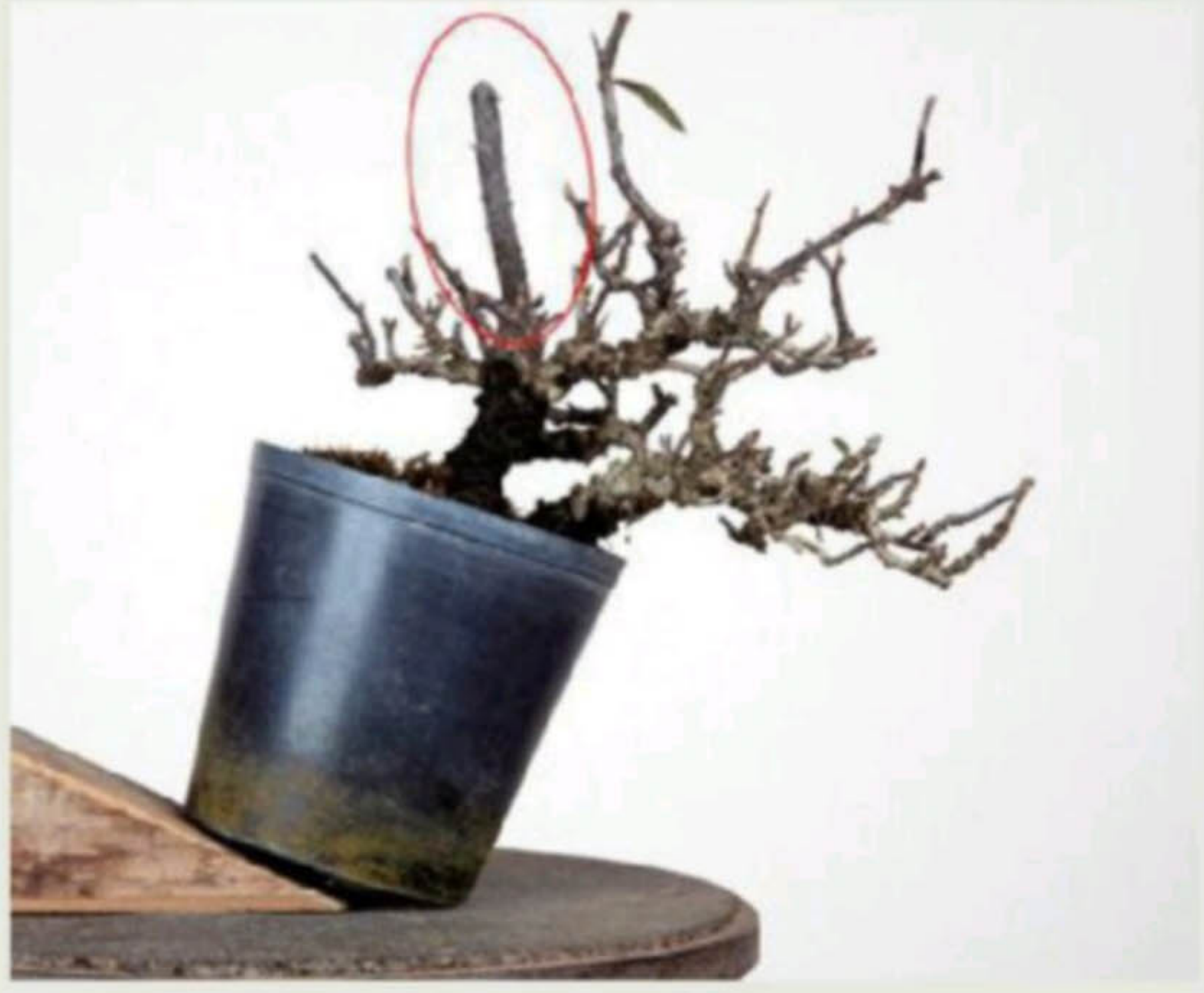


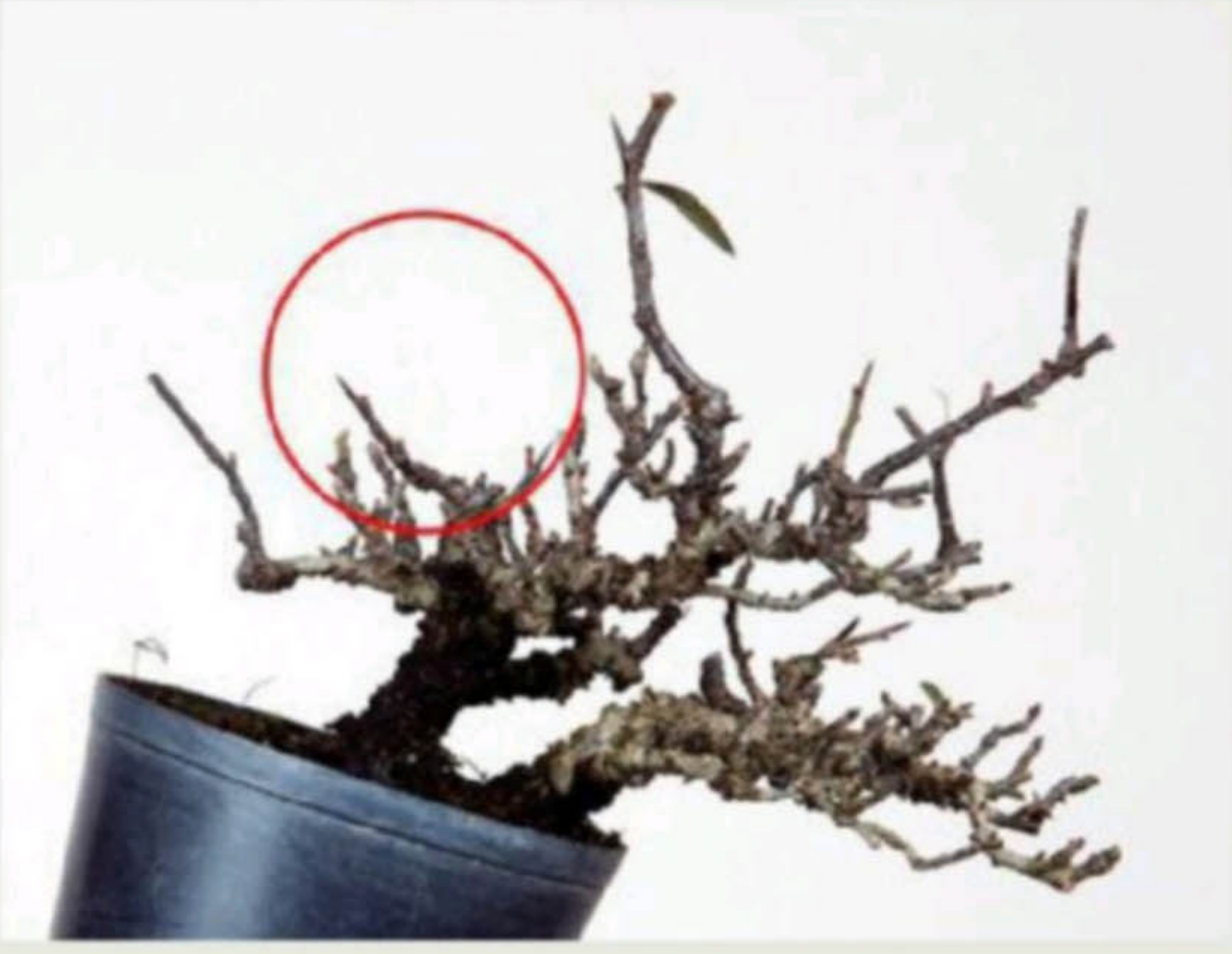
Pyracantha, front before work.
Height: 48 cm
Width: 28 cm

To emphasize the movement of the main and secondary trunks, a plan was made to tilt the planting angle to the right



As the main strong line is growing against the main flow of the tree, extending up to the left without much variation, it was deemed unnecessary and was cut back, leaving a stub



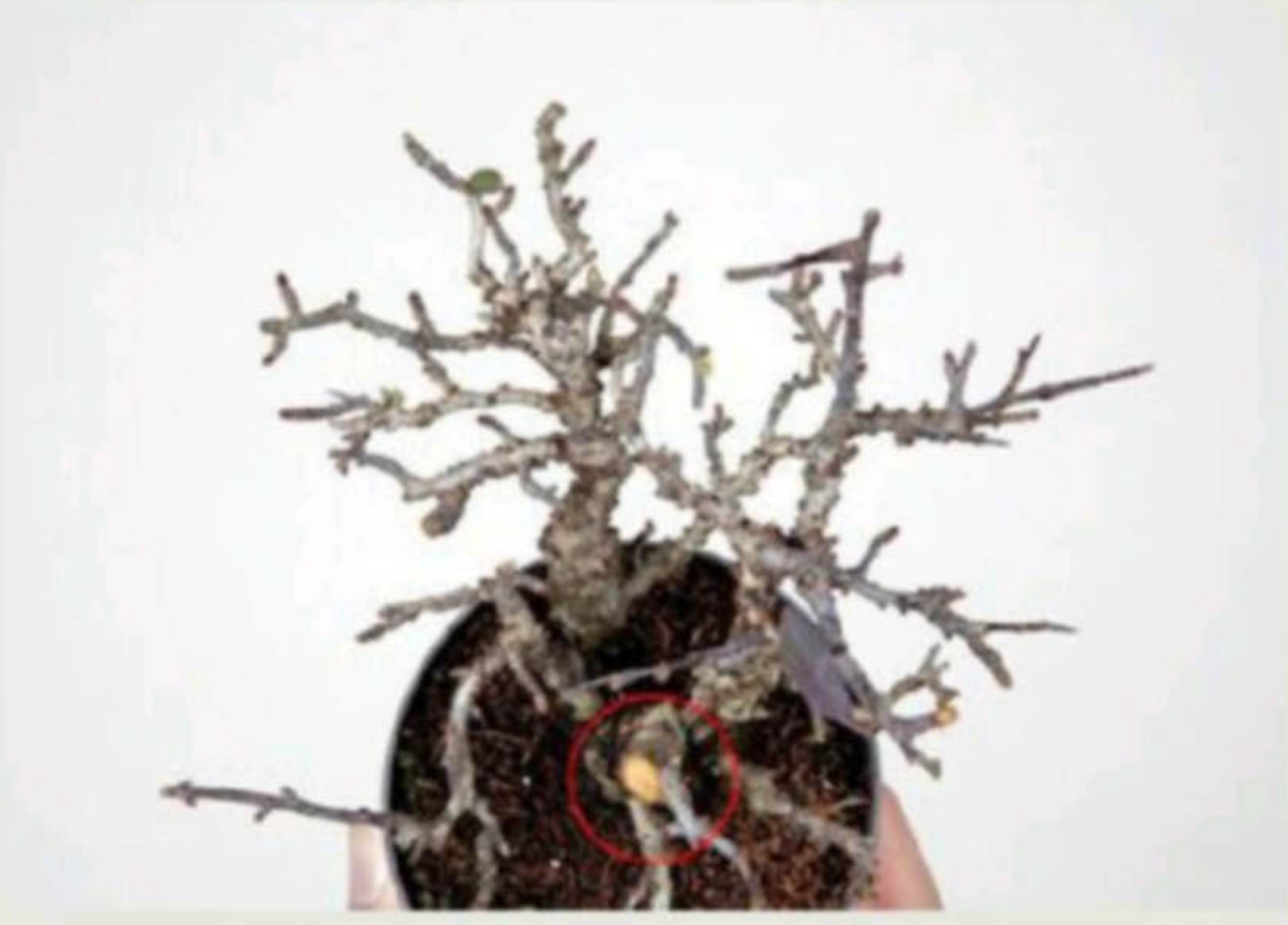


The previously shortened shoot was noticeably thicker than the other branches and lacked natural branching, making it appear monotonous. To improve the overall structure, it was completely removed from the base

Pruning the finer branches and styling

The best time to prune pyracantha is before new buds begin to grow, making early in February an ideal period for this work. Since it is an evergreen tree, its leaves remain even during dormancy. To properly assess the branch structure before pruning and shaping, it is recommended to perform full defoliation beforehand; but pyracantha prepares new buds at the leaf axils, so care must be taken not to remove these buds when defoliating. Since the petioles are short, the key to proper defoliation is to leave a tiny portion of the leaf base intact and carefully cut the leaves using scissors. When pruning, the general rule is to leave 1 – 2 internodes, ensuring that branches split into two at natural fork points to encourage proper branching structure.

After the first round of pruning, as seen from above

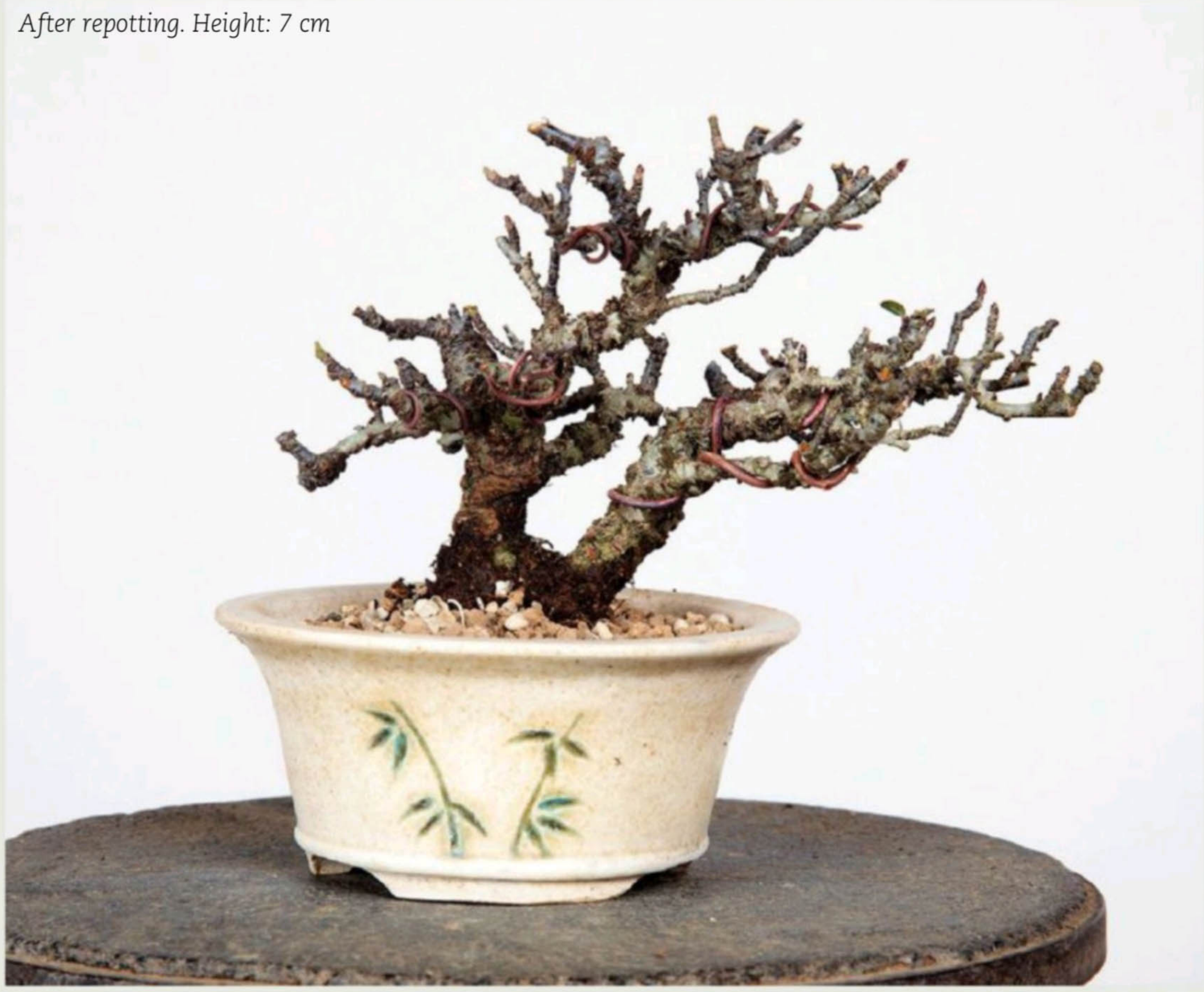


The previous main line of the trunk was removed (marked in circle). All the branches have been brought inwards making the overall shape one size smaller

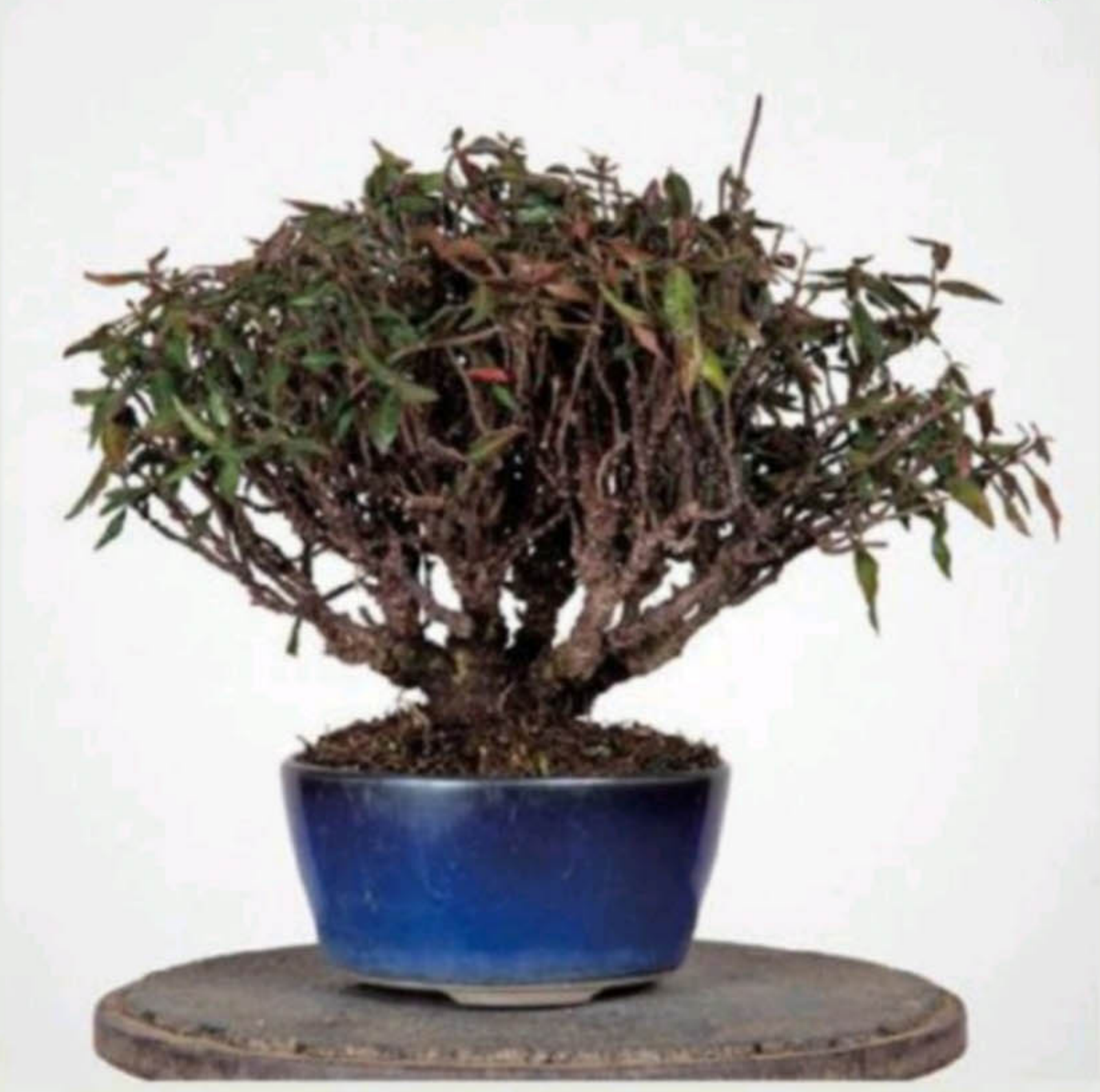
A little wire is applied to improve the direction

By planting the tree slightly higher than before, the previously hidden nebari became more visible, adding a sense of stability to the tree's delicate and slender appearance. Additionally, the large left-extending central shoot was removed, and a right-flowing branch was designated as the new main line of the trunk. This adjustment created better harmony between main and secondary trunks, giving the bonsai a more cohesive and balanced form.

After repotting. Height: 7 cm



Chirimen kazura, the dwarf star jasmine



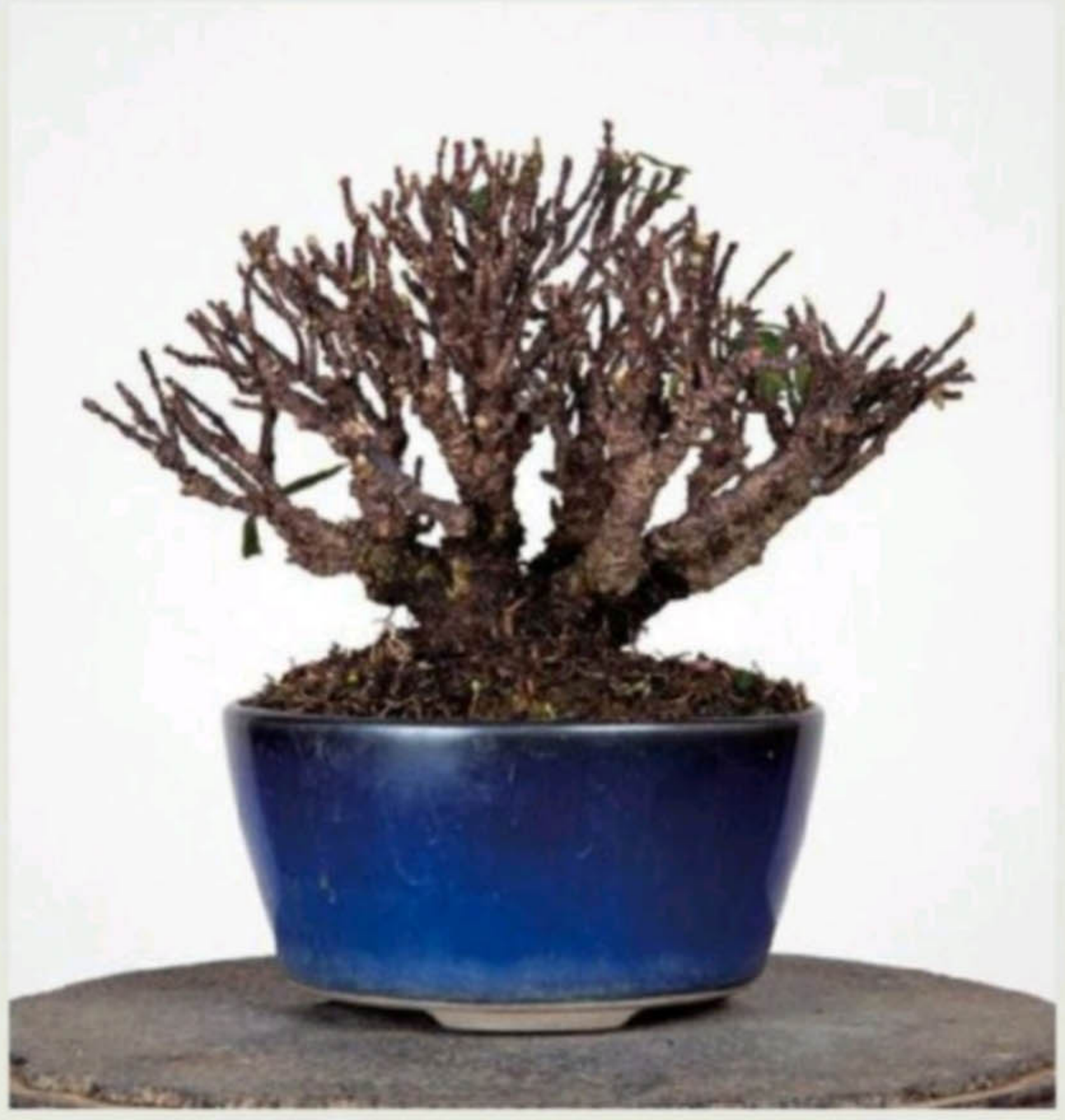
Chirimen kazura, *front before work. Height:13 cm Width: 19 cm*

Thinning out congested branches to create direction

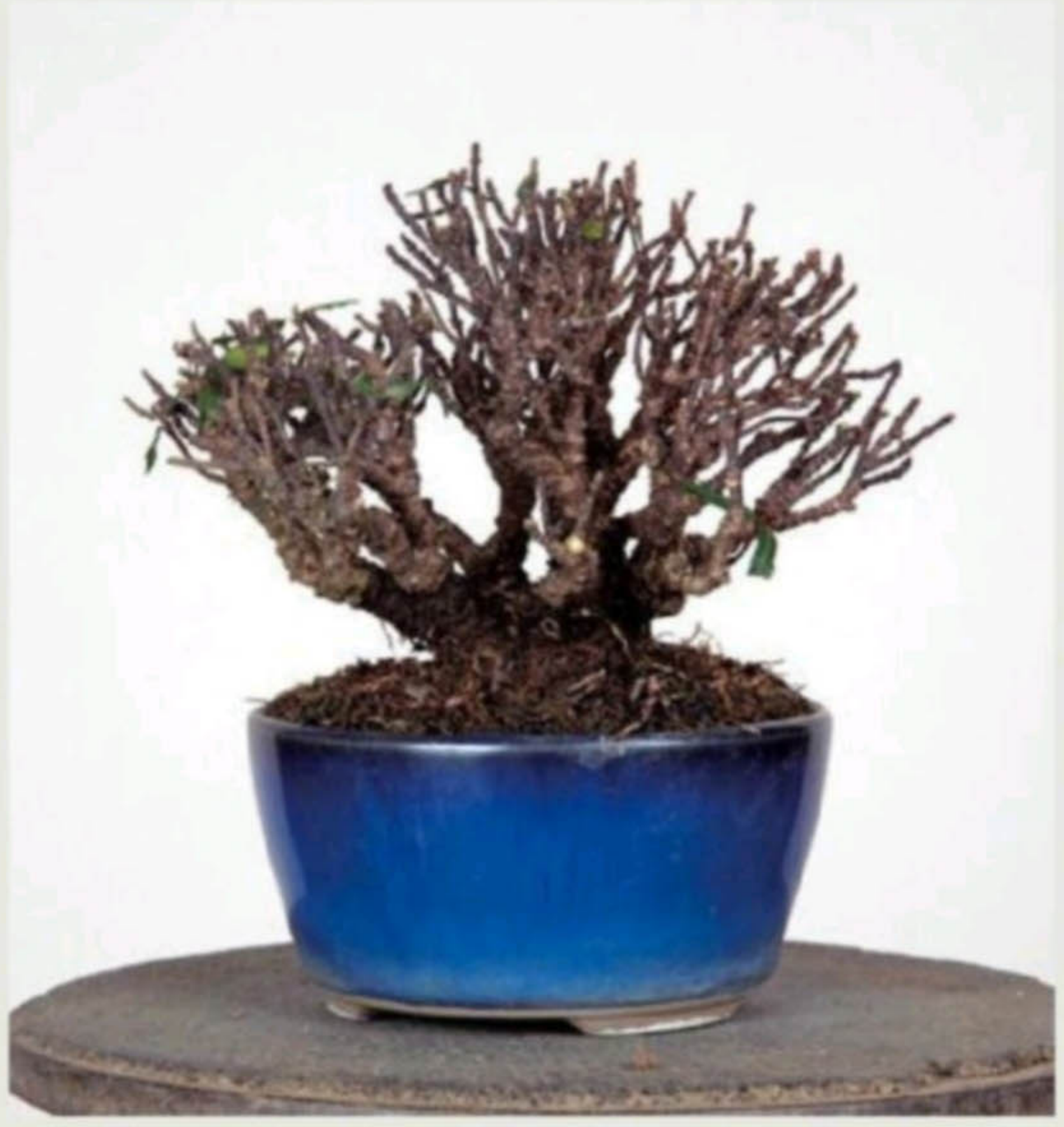
This clump-style *Chirimen kazura* had been carefully cultivated by an enthusiast. It has delicate trunks with beautifully aged bark and seemingly well-arranged fine branches. However, Harumi pointed out some issues. 'The branches are evenly spread, lacking a sense of movement. It makes the composition feel ordinary. The fine branches are concentrated only at the tips. If left like this, the tree may eventually lose inner buds, resulting in a hollowed-out, sparse appearance. It would be better to reorganize branches early on.' So, in order to address these concerns, the front and planting position were reassessed, followed by pruning of the branch tips to improve structure and movement.

After performing defoliation to better assess the branch structure, Harumi Ishii decided to change the front view of the tree. The new front was chosen by rotating the old back slightly clockwise. In the view of the original front, trunks of similar thickness appeared evenly spaced, whereas the new front introduced more variation in trunk positioning, enhancing depth and natural movement. The new perspective divides the structure into two distinct blocks, the main group on the right and a smaller group on the left, adding more dynamism and variation to the previously monotonous silhouette. The structure is now more visually engaging.

The back will become the new front and divided into two groups to give a twin-trunk feel

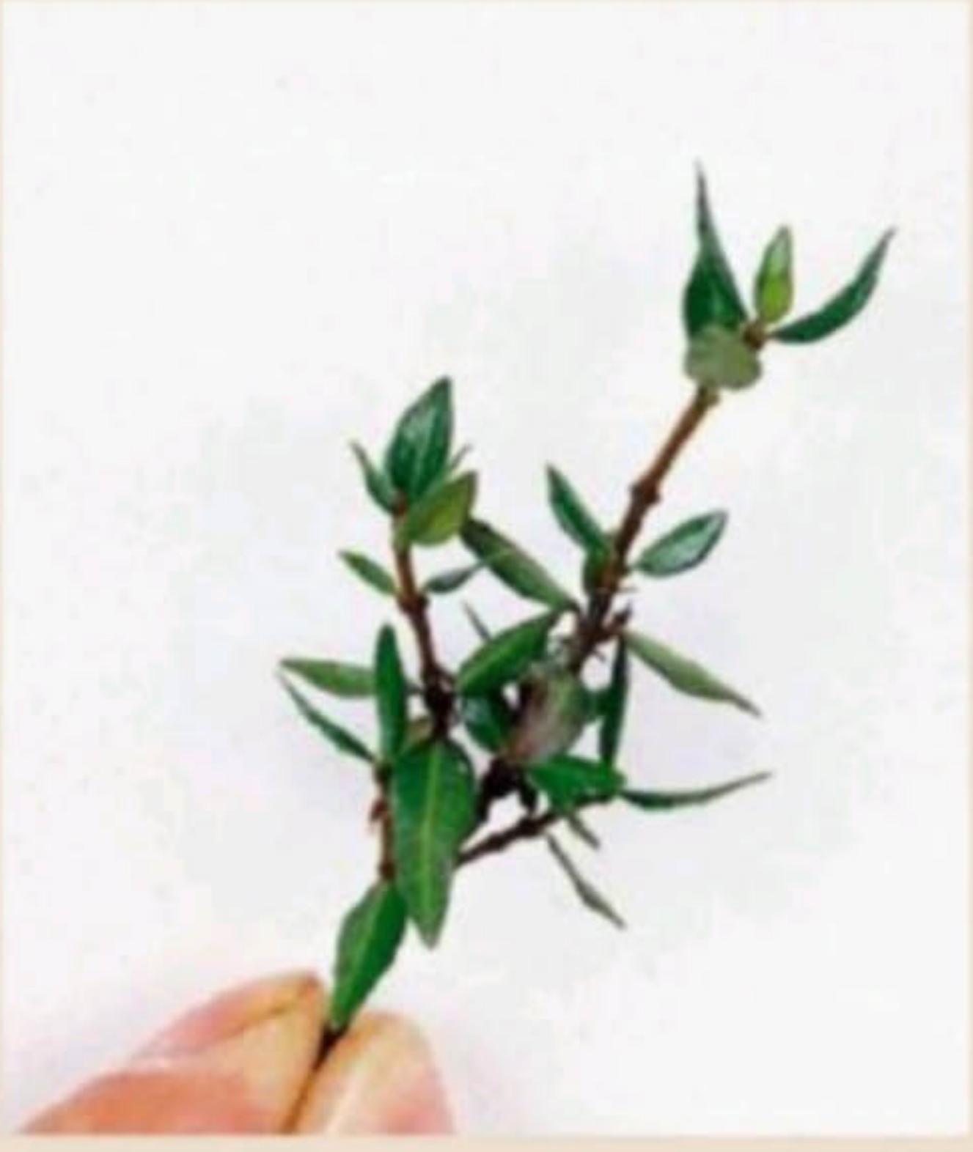


After pruning back, as seen from the old front

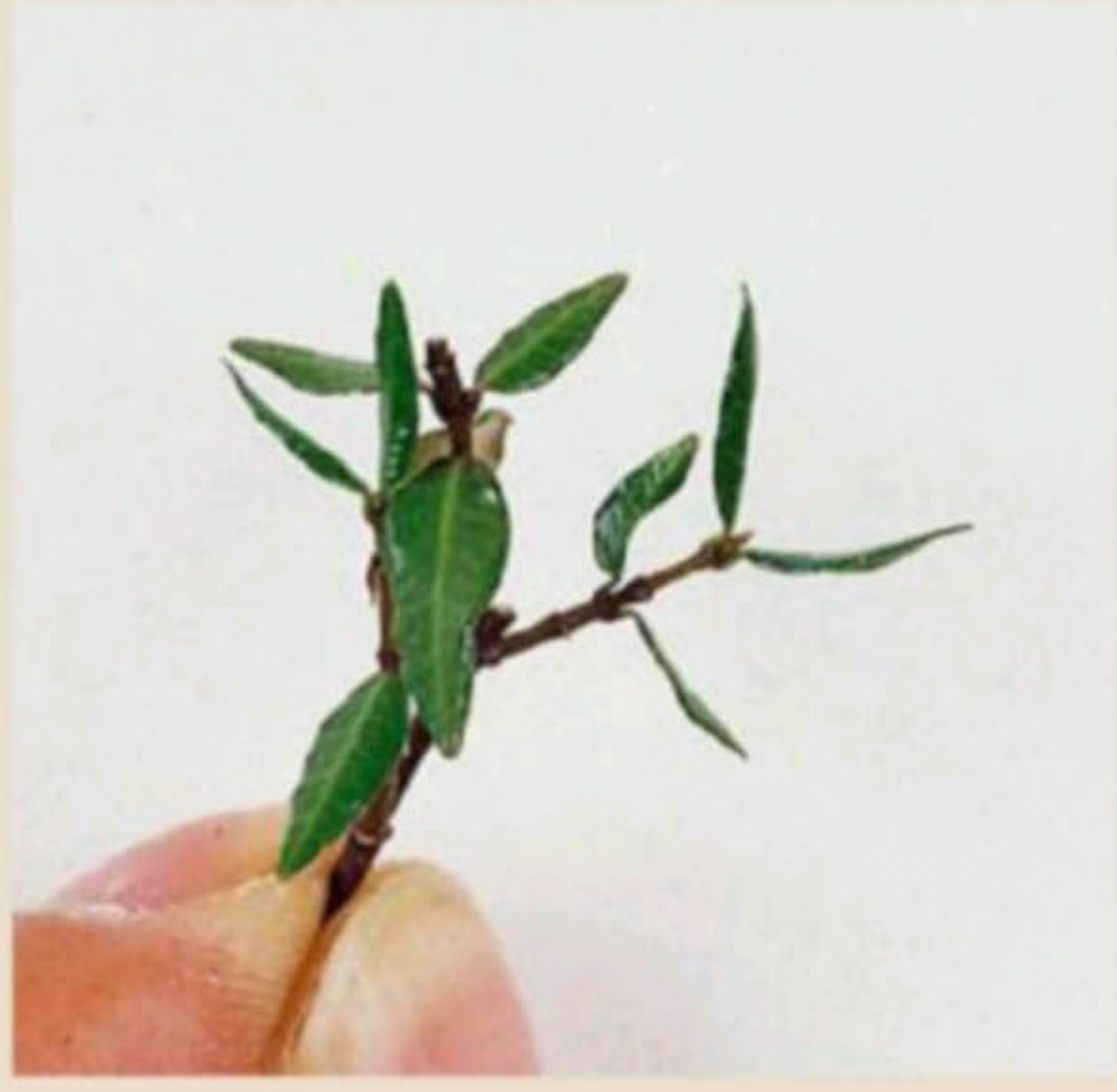


The outline is pruned back and all remaining leaves are removed

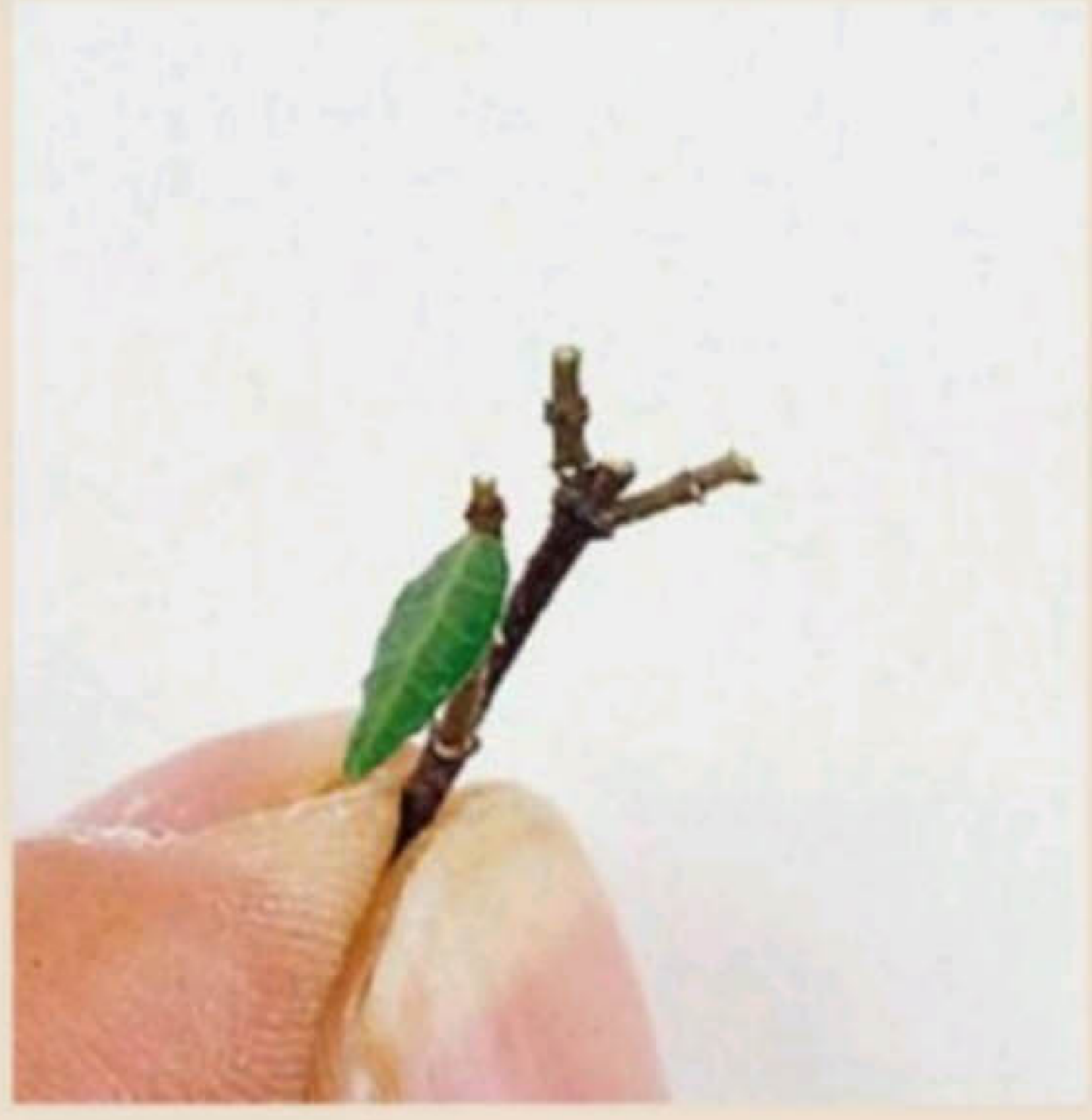
The basics of pruning Chirimen kazura



An example of before pruning. There are long shoots that throw the outline into disorder. It is usual to simply cut the shoots back to the outline

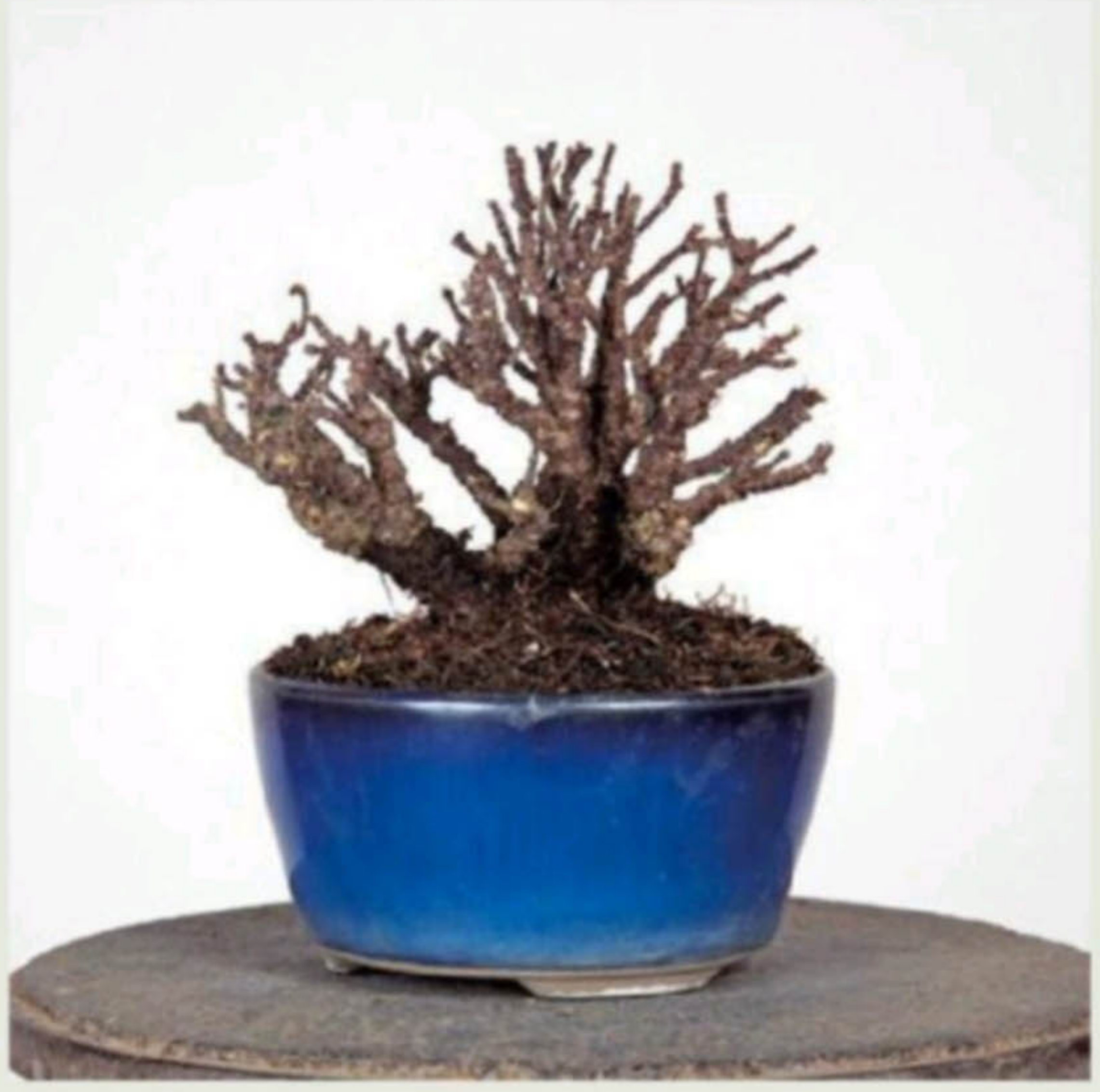


Here is an example of pruning to leave two internodes. As with other deciduous trees, the basic approach is to thin out dense branches to create natural bifurcations, then prune back while leaving one to two internodes

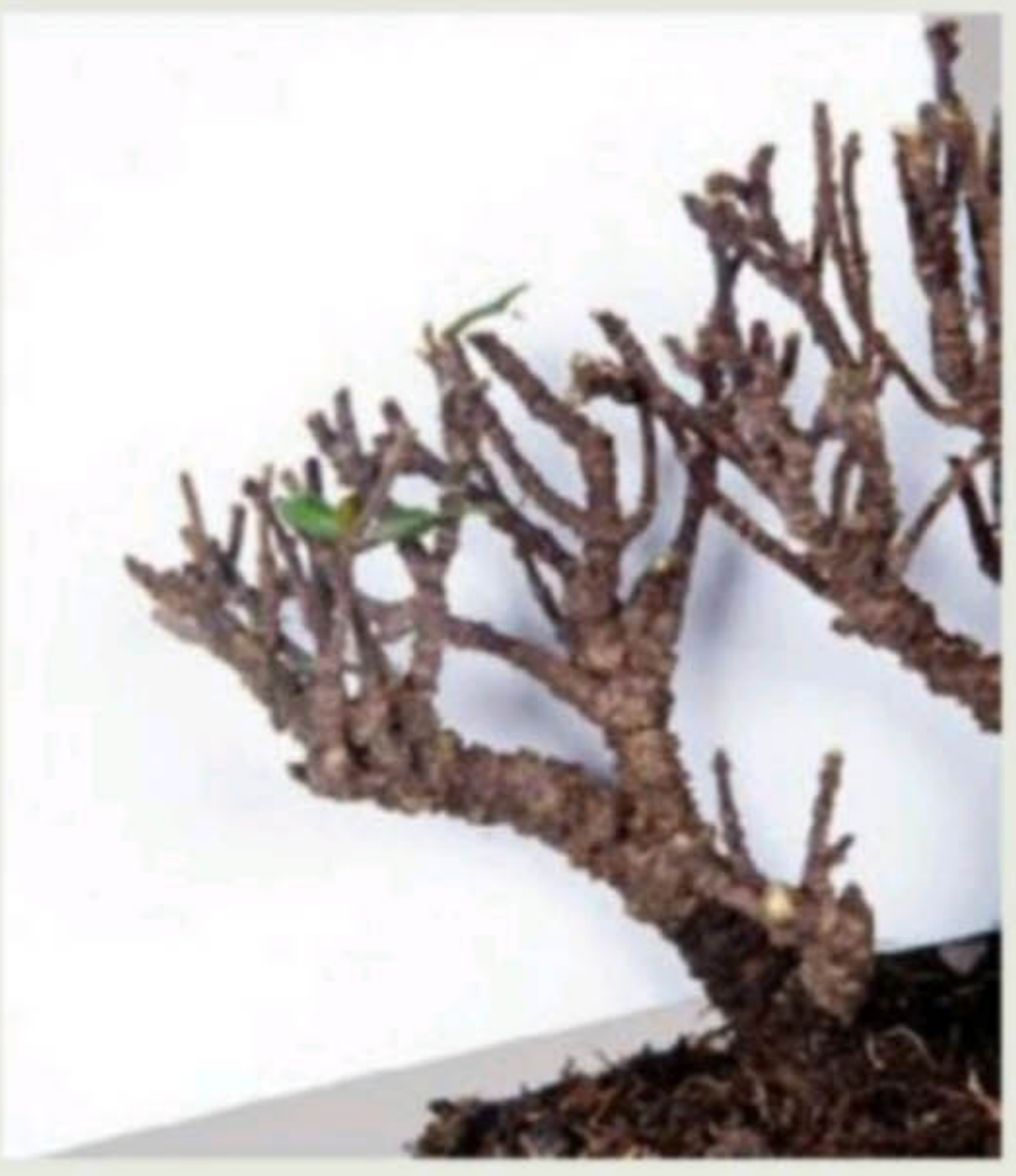


When the fine branching is very dense, it can be cut back to leave just one node or even back on to the old stem. Cutting back hard will result in a new back bud forming somewhere

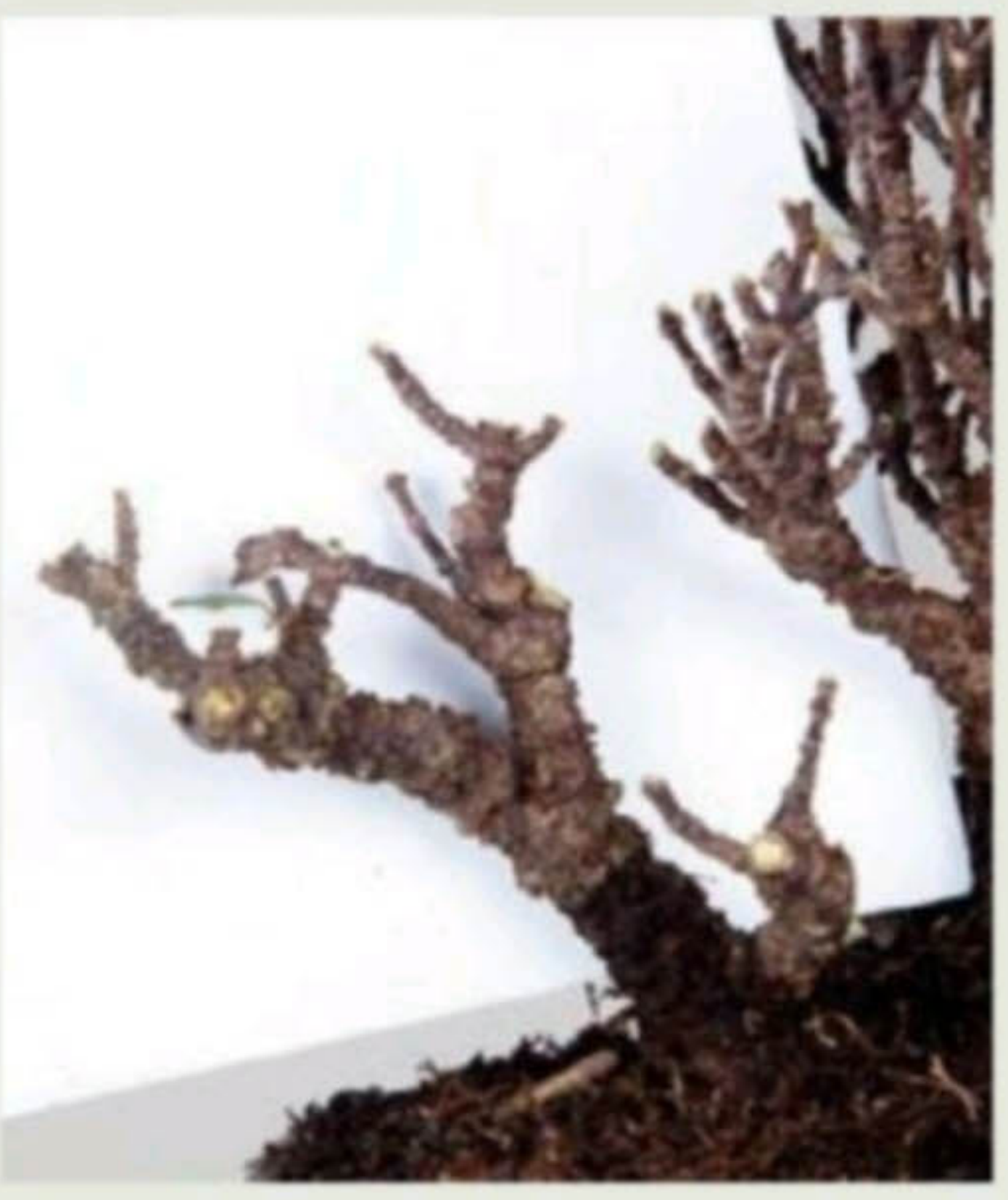
After pruning and thinning branches. As seen from the front



Pruning encourages numerous new buds to sprout from the internodes, and since the evergreen foliage will eventually cover the branches, there is not so much concern about branch refinement compared to deciduous trees. However, the maintenance of a bifurcated branching structure remains fundamental for Chirimen kazura, *as well. Though the total branch volume has been reduced significantly, the tree will be quickly regenerating new shoots, therefore there is no need to hesitate when making deep cuts to refine the structure*

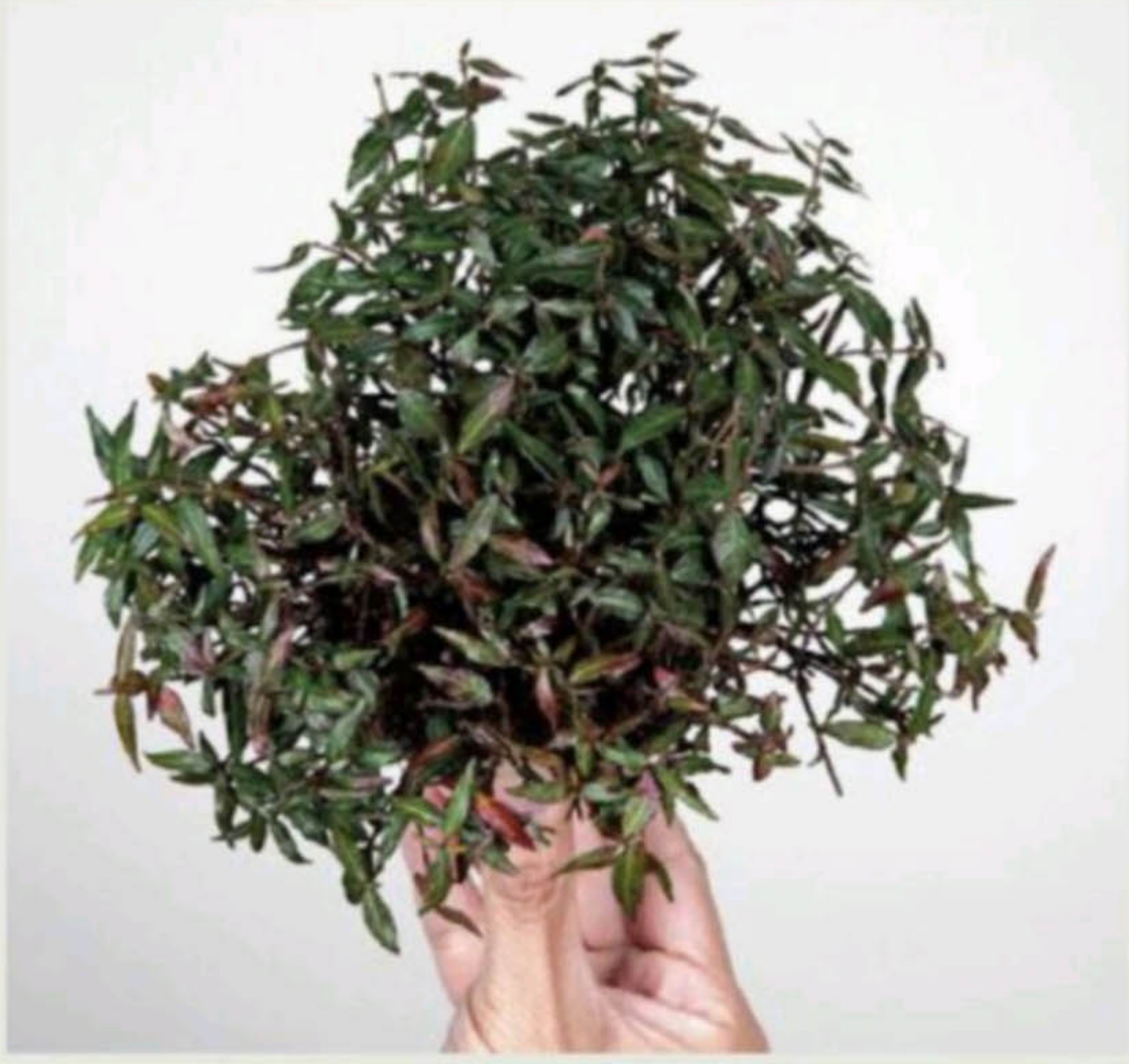


The smaller trunk group after the first round of pruning

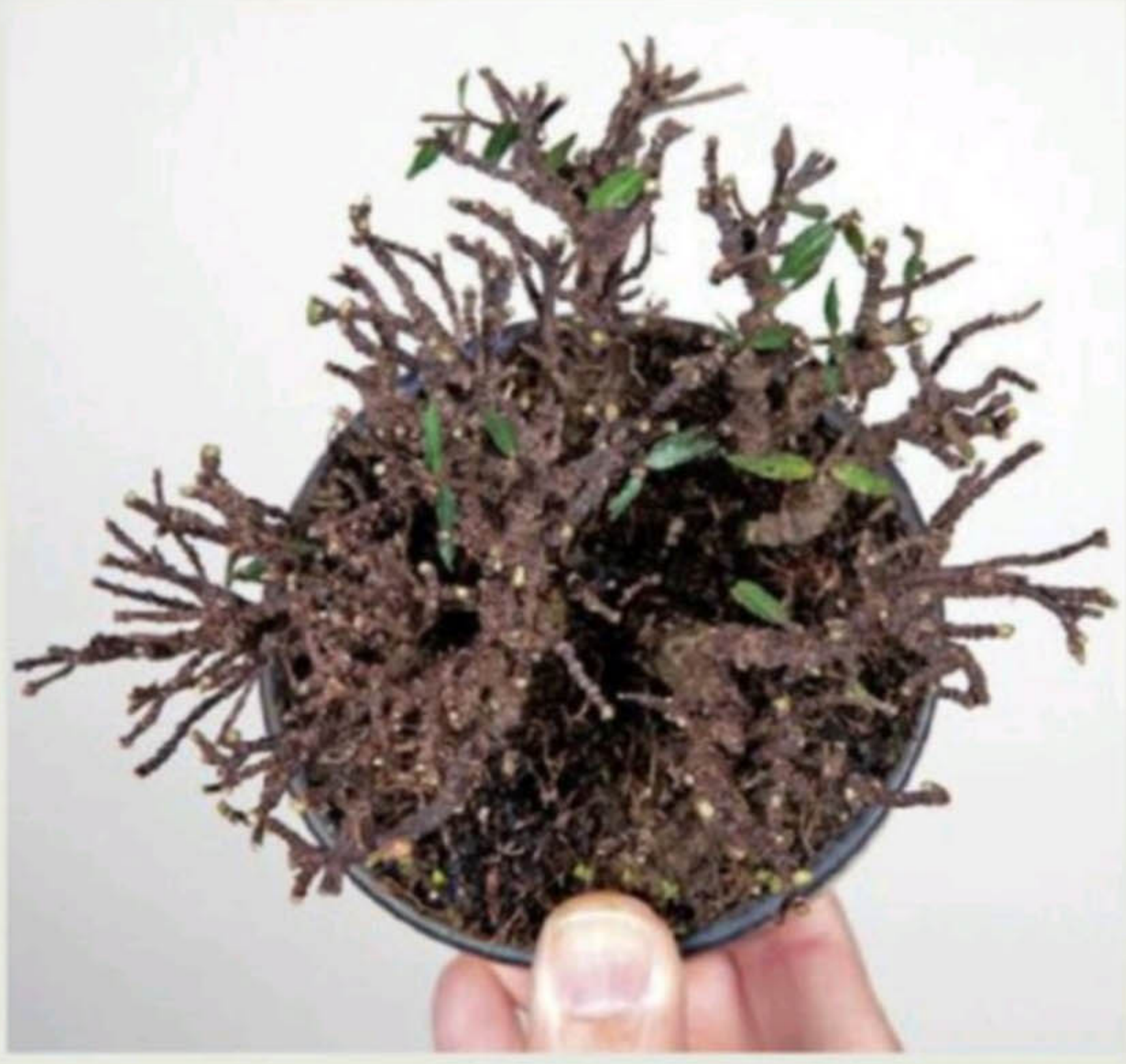


After pruning to improve the bifurcated structure

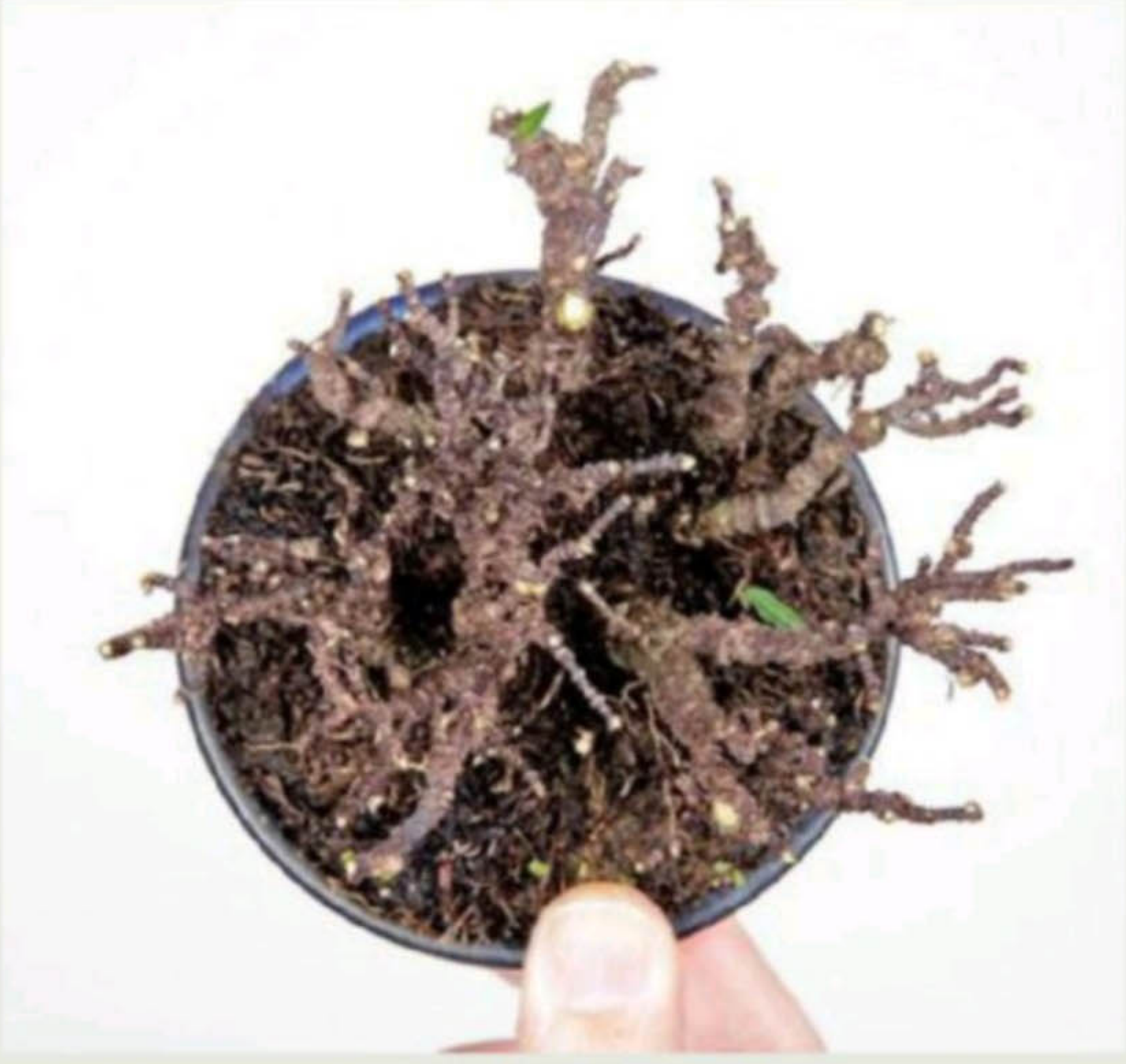
After pruning to improve the bifurcated structure



Before work as seen from above

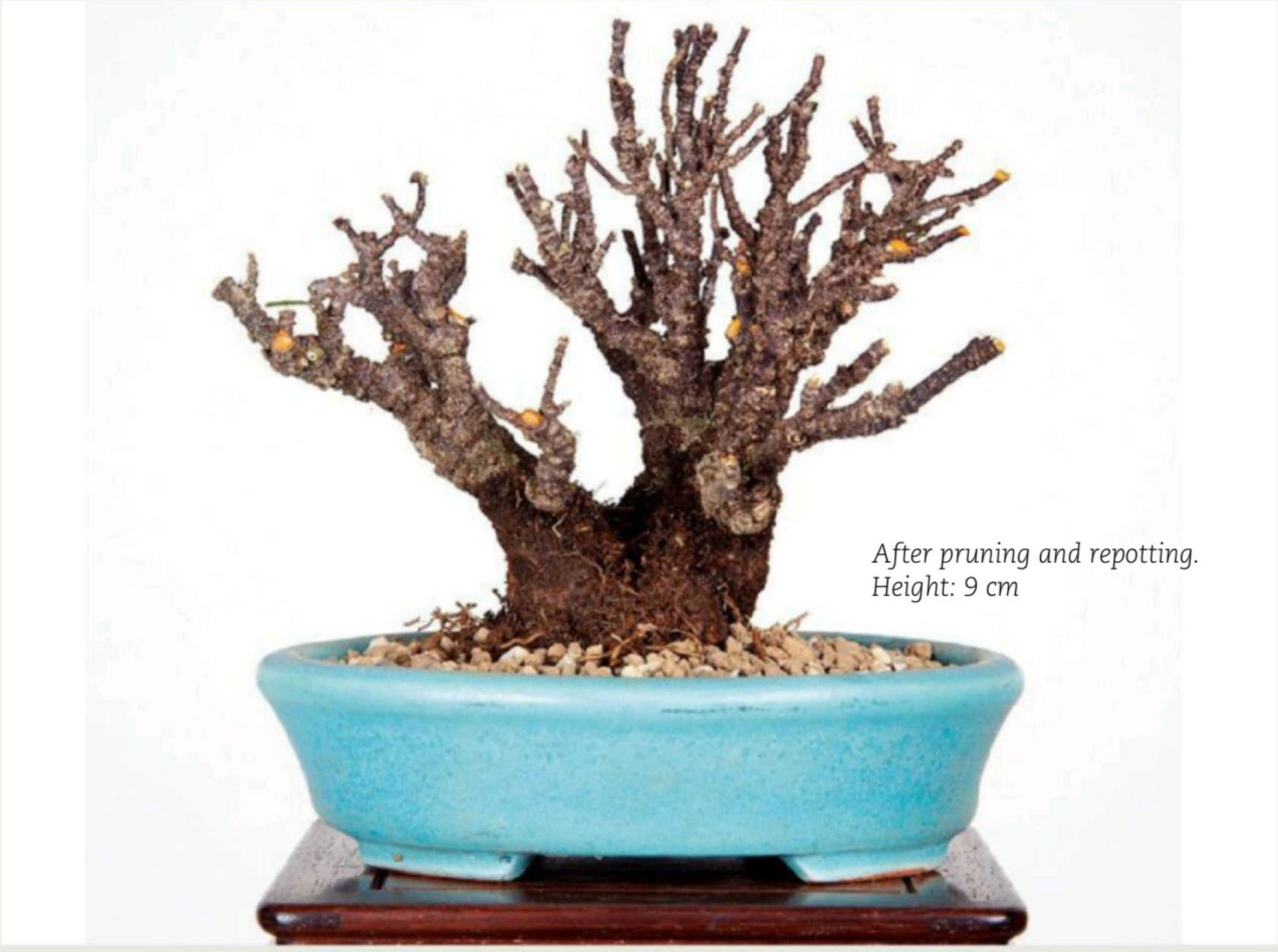


After the initial stage of topiary style pruning



After the second stage of refinement pruning

The ideal time to prune *Chirimen kazura* is around June, during the growth period. However, when performing heavy pruning as water absorption is peaking can disrupt the balance between water uptake and transpiration, potentially weakening the tree. To minimize stress, it's best to prune just before the bud movement (during February–March), as the timing of bud activity is the same as the root movement, thus reducing the impact. Light pruning and repotting are particularly well-suited for this period. On this occasion, the heavy pruning and repotting were carried out simultaneously for the photoshoot. However, in regular cultivation, if a tree is pruned heavily, it's safer to postpone any repotting and focus on recovery and growth instead. You will find that this approach ensures stronger bud development after pruning.

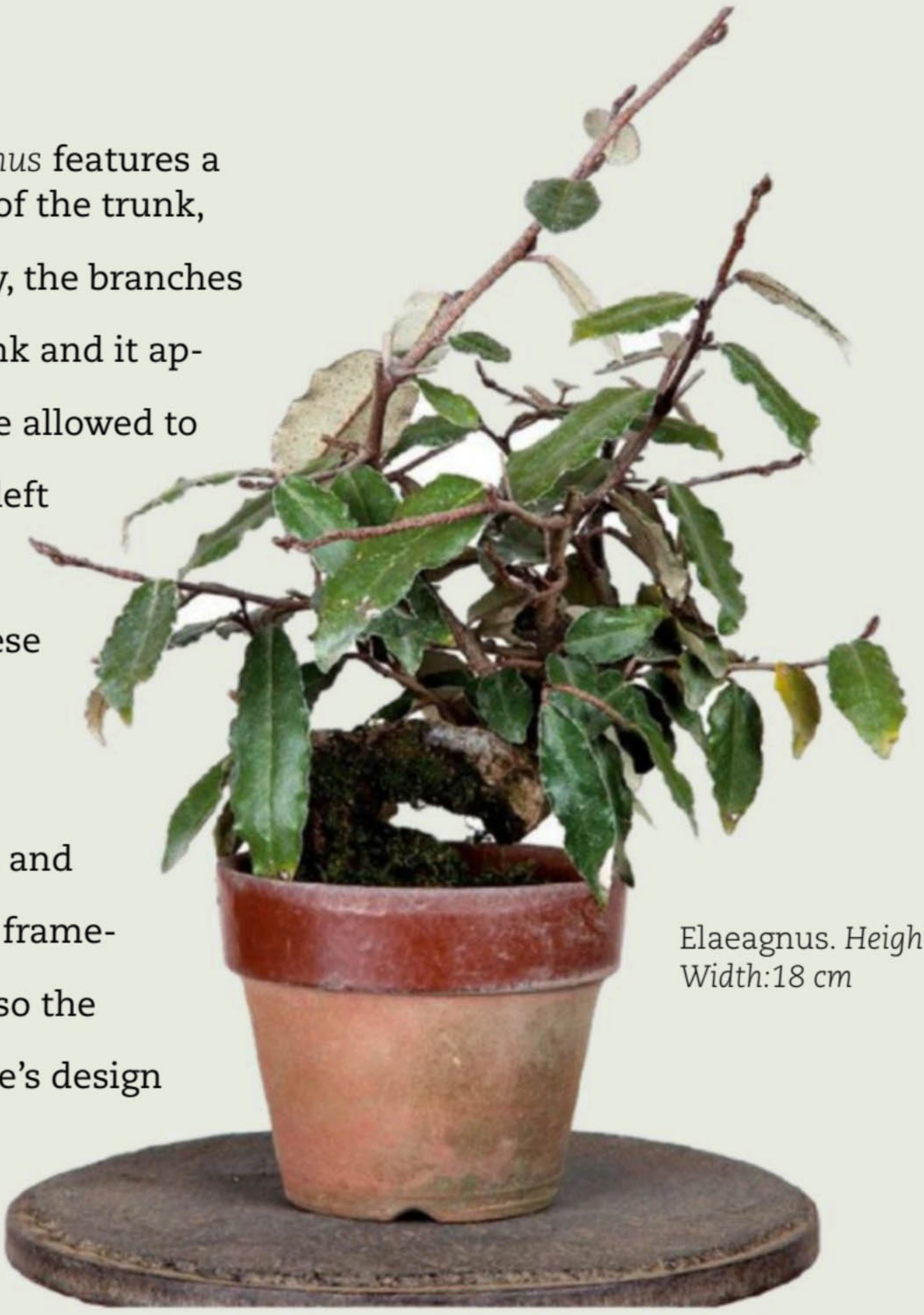


After pruning and repotting. Height: 9 cm

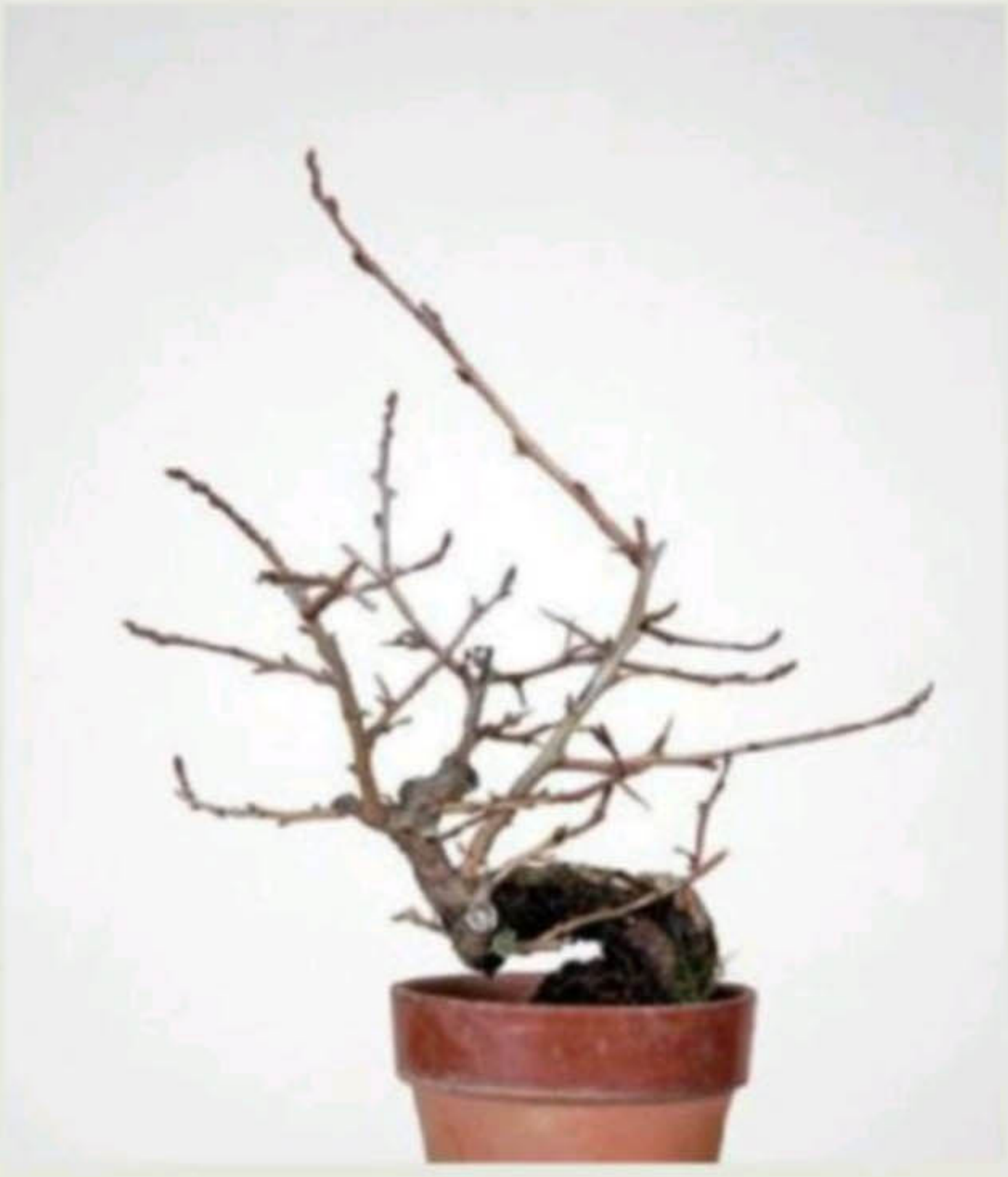
Elaeagnus

Reconsidering the design to make the most of the trunk and dealing with leggy branches

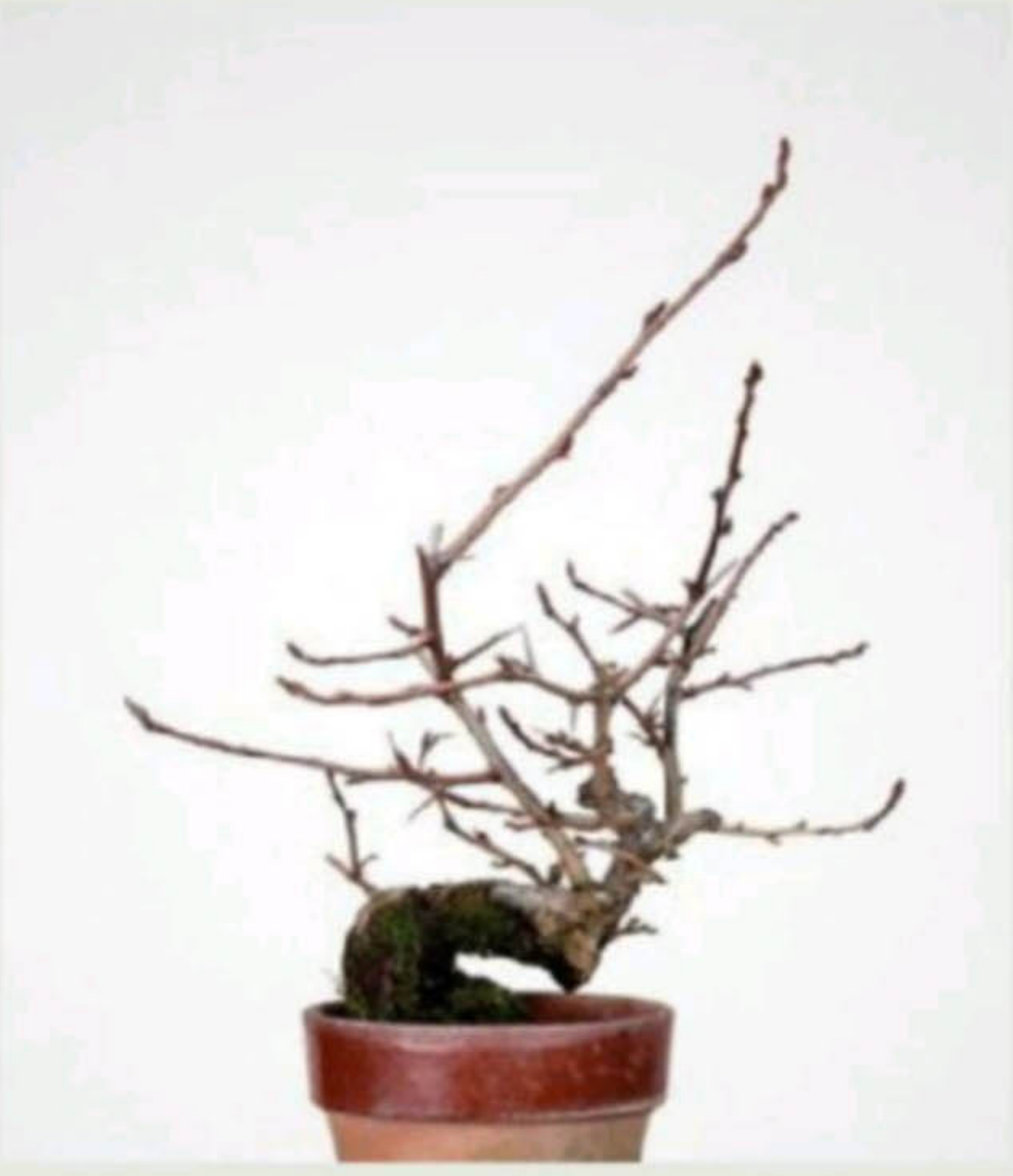
This semi-cascade style *Elaeagnus* features a dramatic bend near the base of the trunk, which is the focal point. Currently, the branches are still thin compared to the trunk and it appears that multiple branches were allowed to grow so as to thicken the base. If left unchecked, though, internodes may become too long, making these branches unsuitable for the final design. The first stage was to defoliate the tree to see the trunk and branch structure. The thick trunk framework is already well-established, so the next stage is to reconsider the tree's design and then cutting back elongated branches to start refining the branch framework.



Elaeagnus. *Height: 21 cm*
Width:18 cm

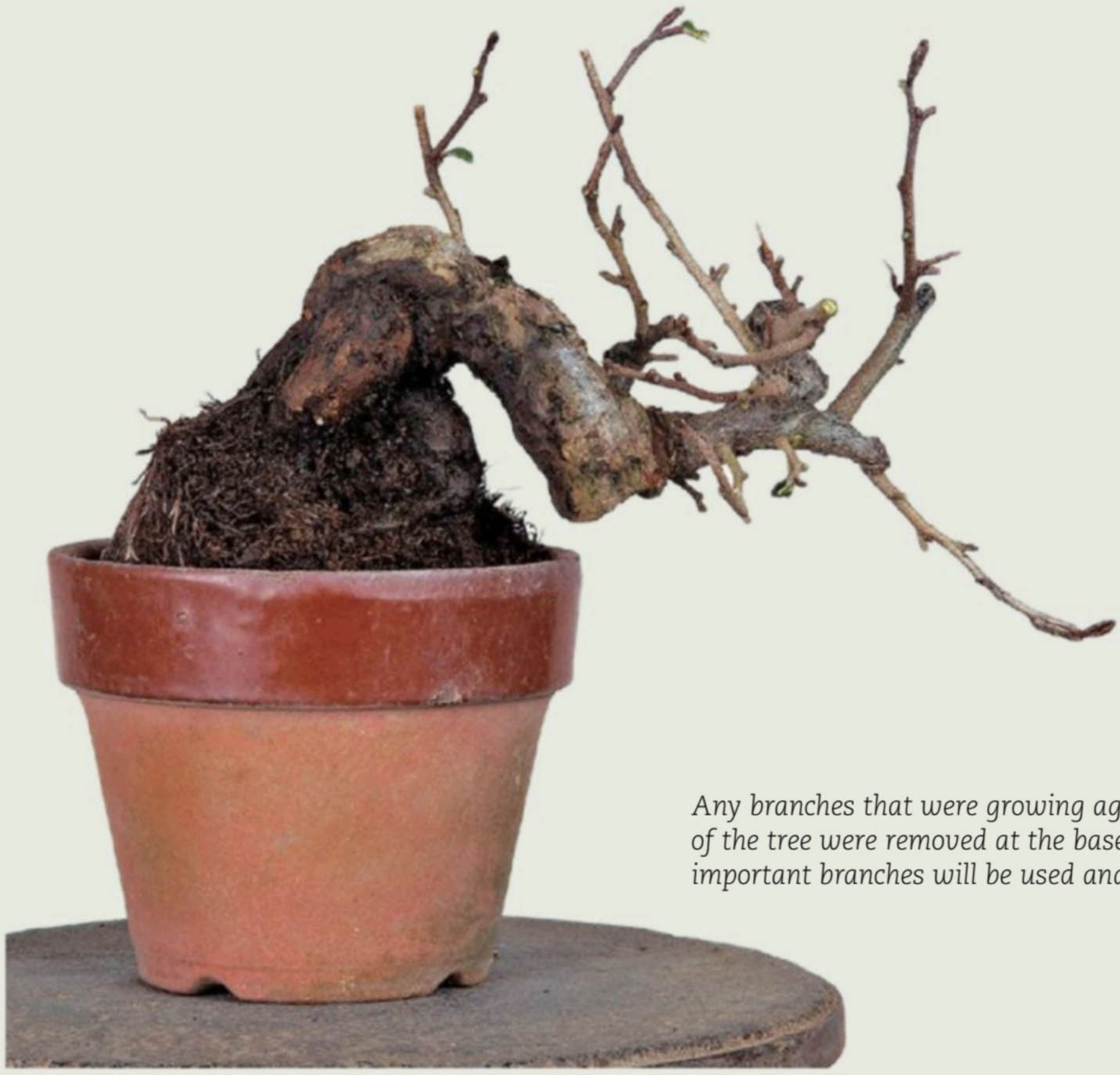


After defoliation, viewed from the rear.



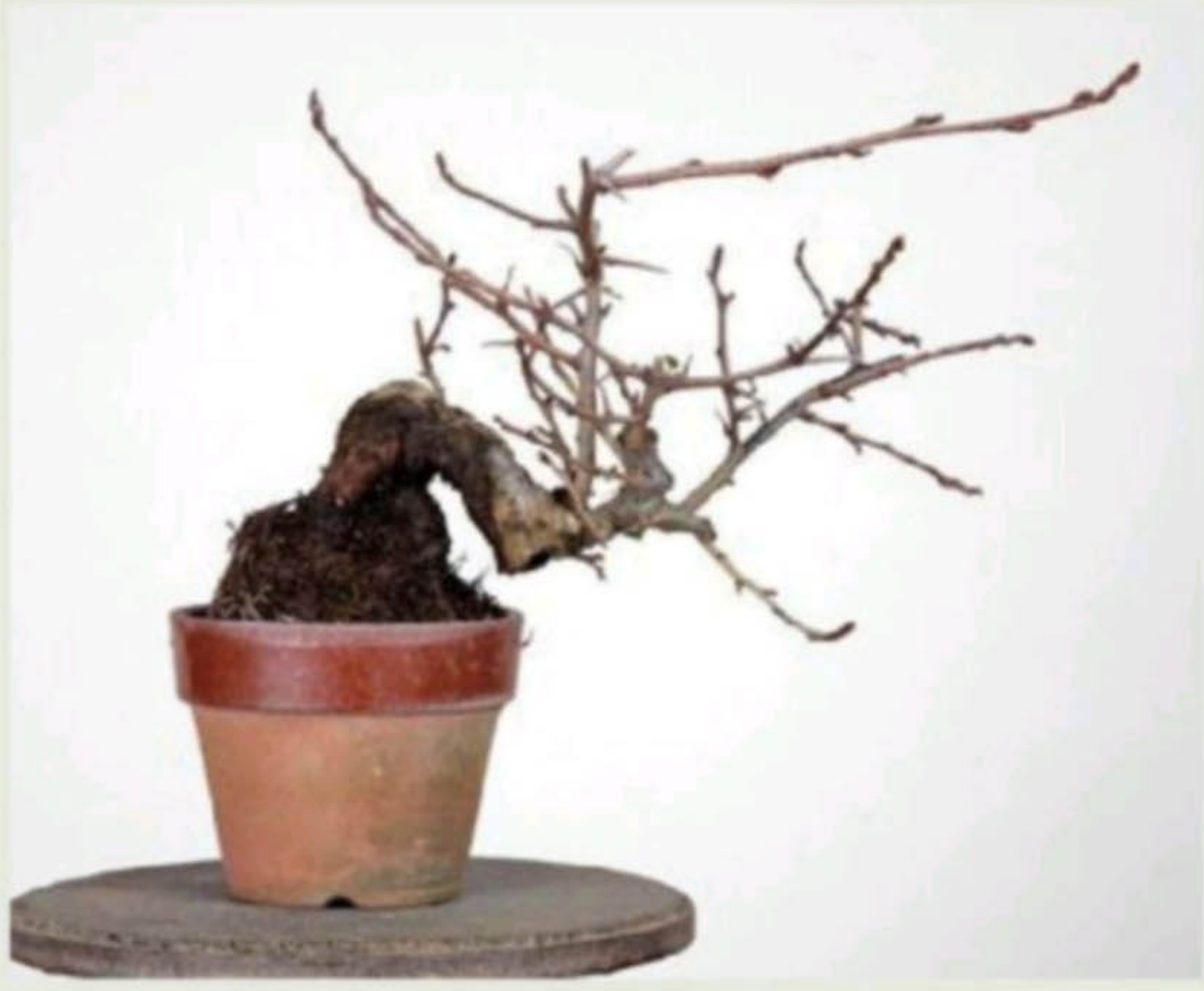
After defoliation viewed from the front

Considering angle change and front, pruning the long branches



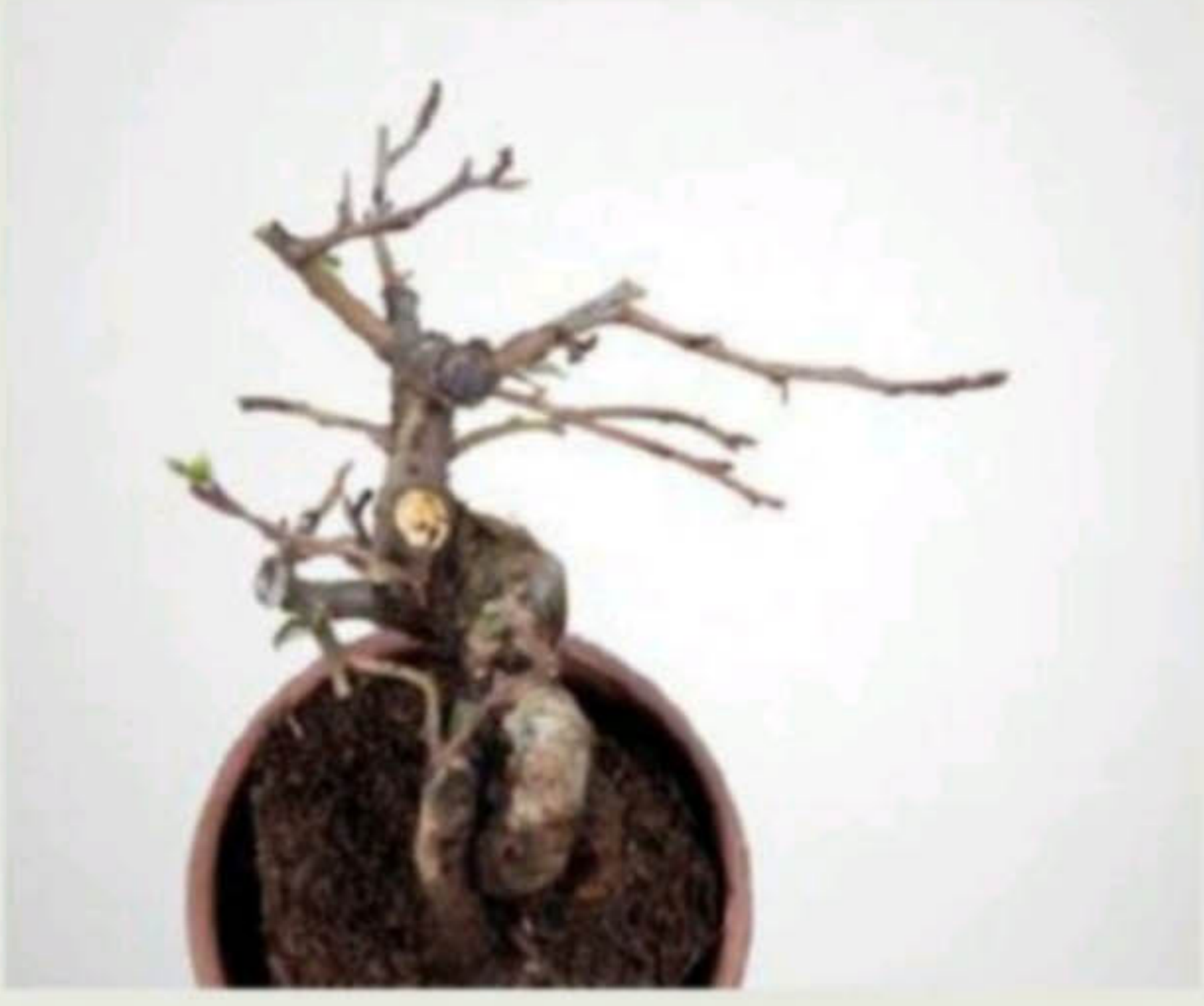
Any branches that were growing against the flow of the tree were removed at the base. Now only the important branches will be used and wired

The long branches were cut back to the rough shape of the outline

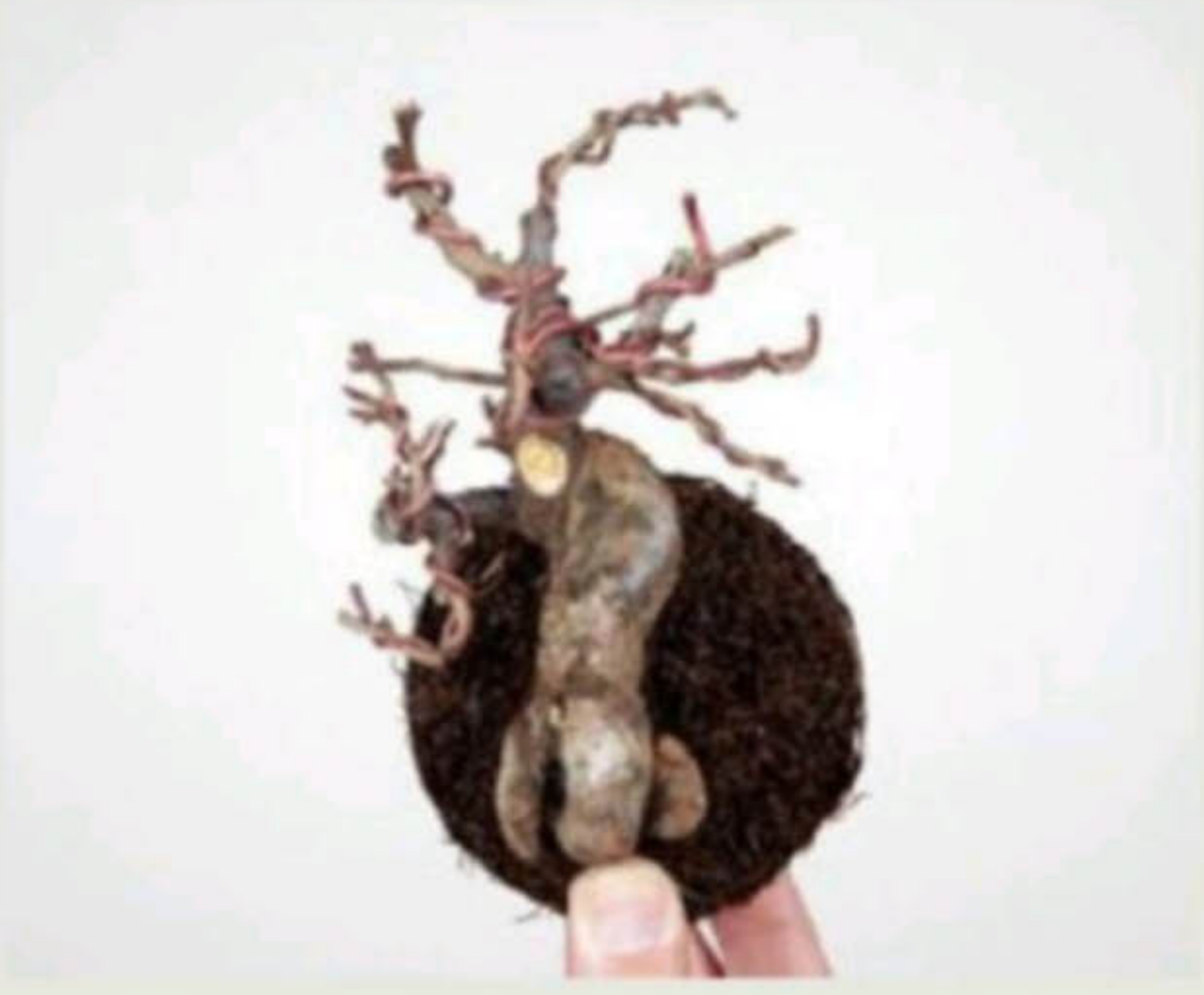


To emphasize the dramatic rightward movement of the trunk, Harumi planned to tilt the planting angle further to the right. If the tree can be positioned at this steeper angle, it will enhance its distinctive character.

After pruning, as seen from above

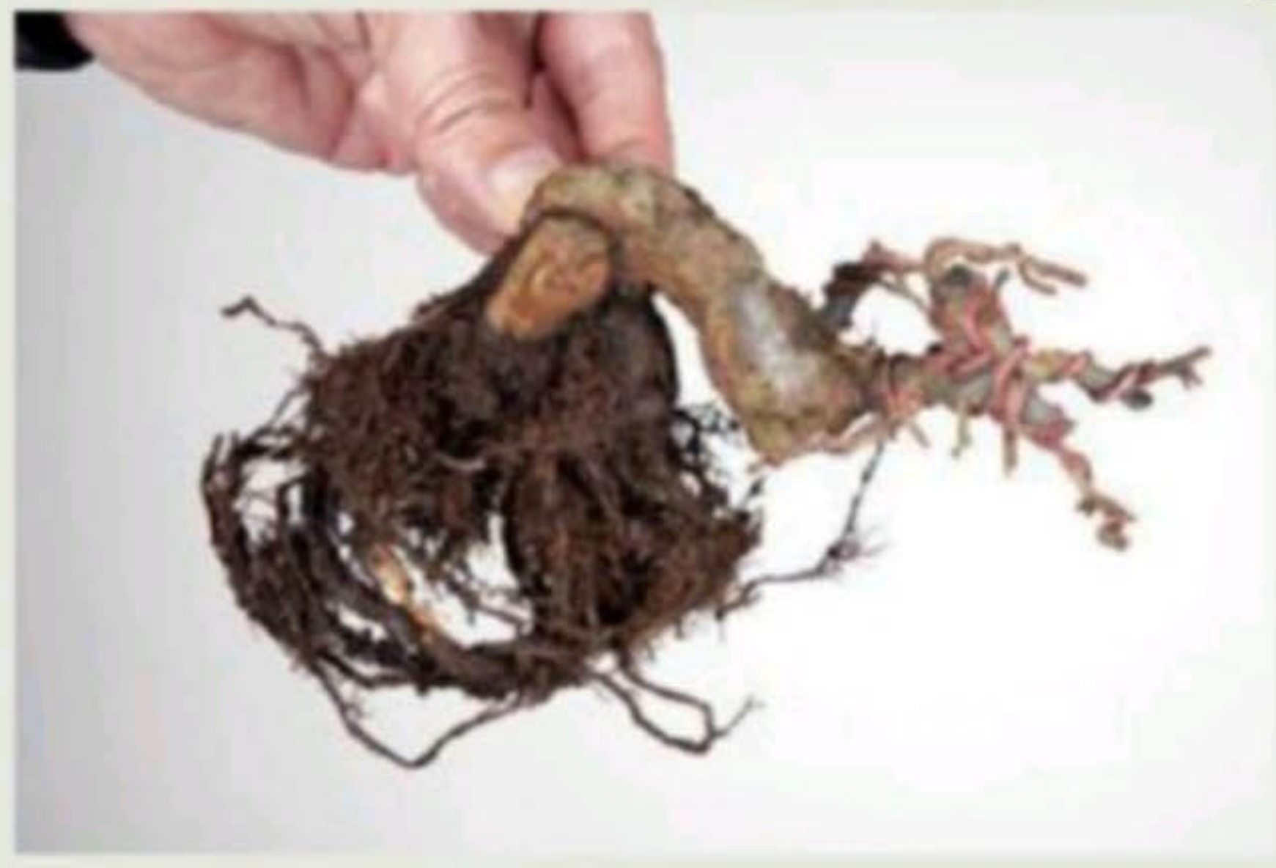


Branches that went against the natural flow of the trunk were removed. However, some long branches extending towards the right (front in the photo) were left intact for now

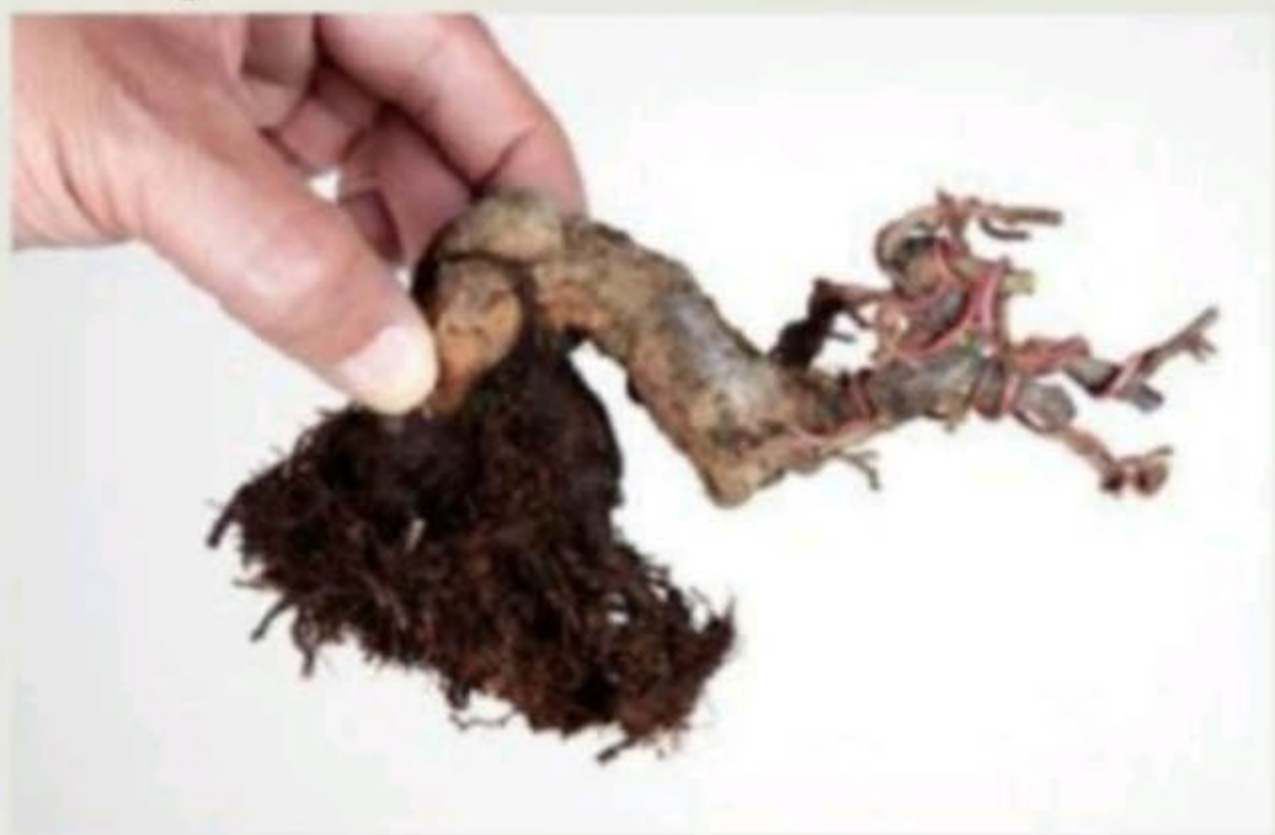


After pruning and styling. All of the long branches that were out of shape have been pruned back making a more compact outline

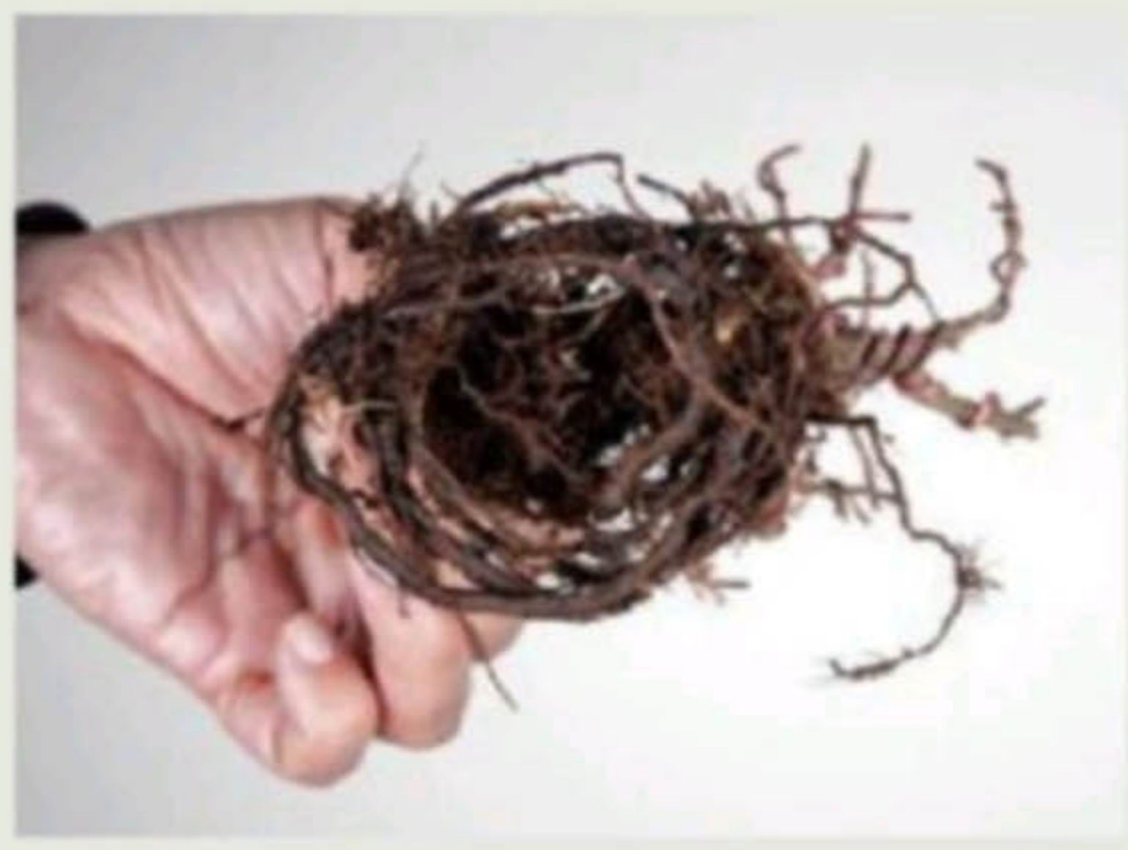
Thick roots that are filling the pot are cut back



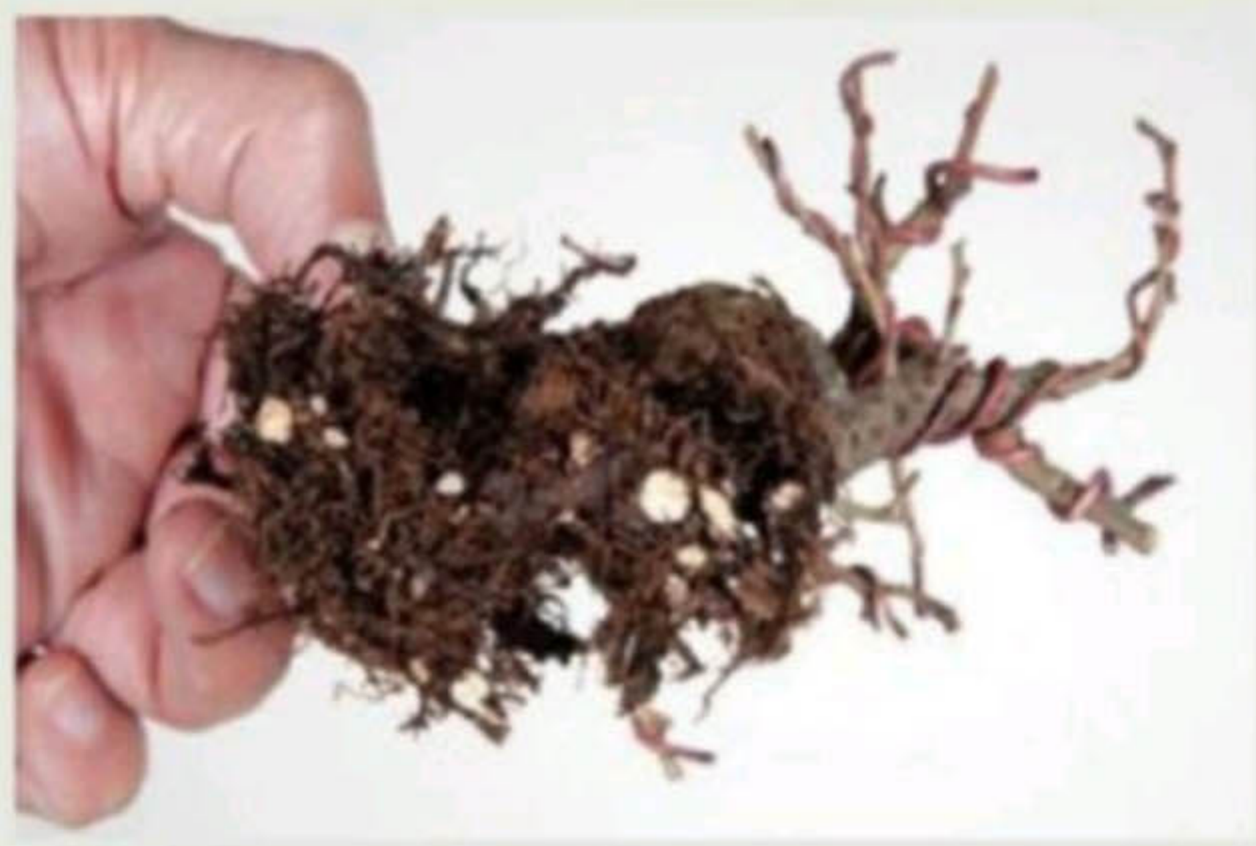
Before root work, as seen from the front



After root work, as seen from the front

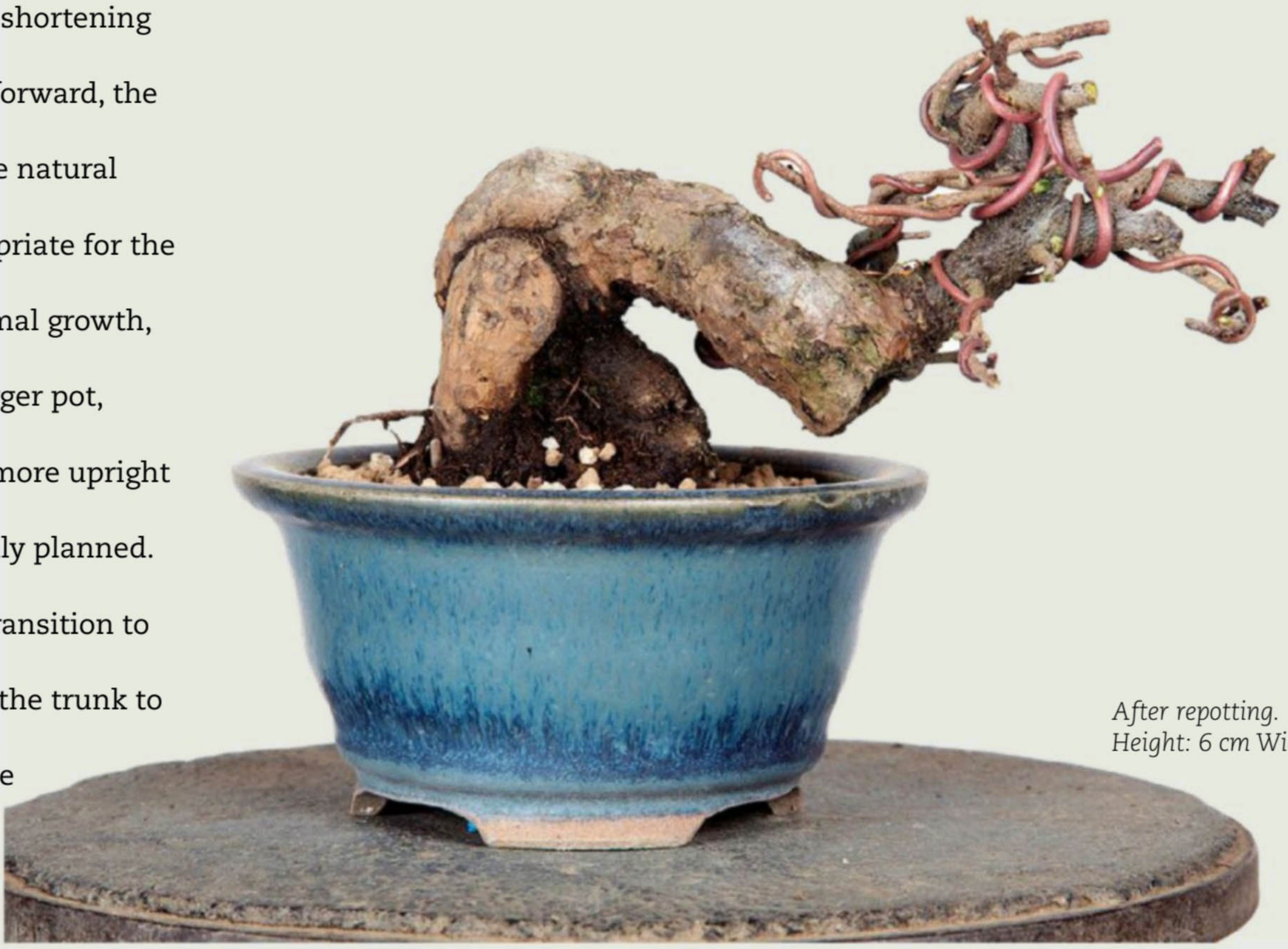


Before root work, seen from below. Thick roots have grown round and round the inside of the pot



If those thick roots are left to strengthen it will be very difficult to develop fine branches. They should be pruned back as soon as possible

By removing branches that opposed the rightward flow and shortening those that extended too far forward, the tree is now exhibiting a more natural cascading movement, appropriate for the semi-cascade style. For optimal growth, it was placed in a slightly larger pot, which resulted in a slightly more upright angle of planting than initially planned. In the future, the goal is to transition to a smaller pot, further tilting the trunk to enhance its dramatic cascade and create an even more powerful, dynamic form.



After repotting.
Height: 6 cm Width: 11 cm

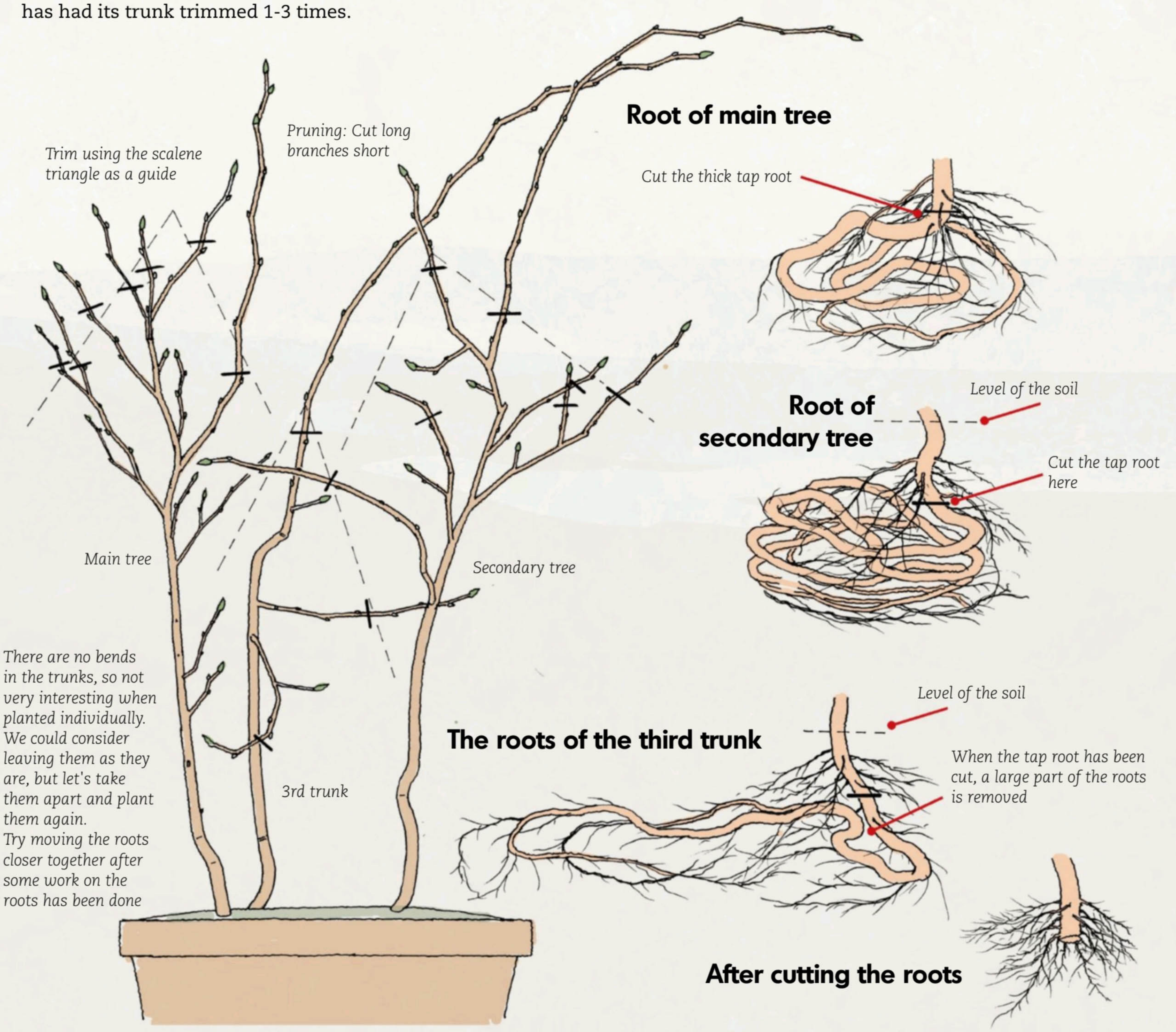
PERSIMMON

Text and photography: Kinbon, Japan Illustrations: Kyosuke Gun

How to create bonsai from cuttings, grafting and other methods using interesting and unusual species. Helped by Kyosuke Gun's illustrations we give you easy-to-understand explanations. Let's see how to take the material through to its completion. This time we are working with a seedling of persimmon (*Diospyros*)

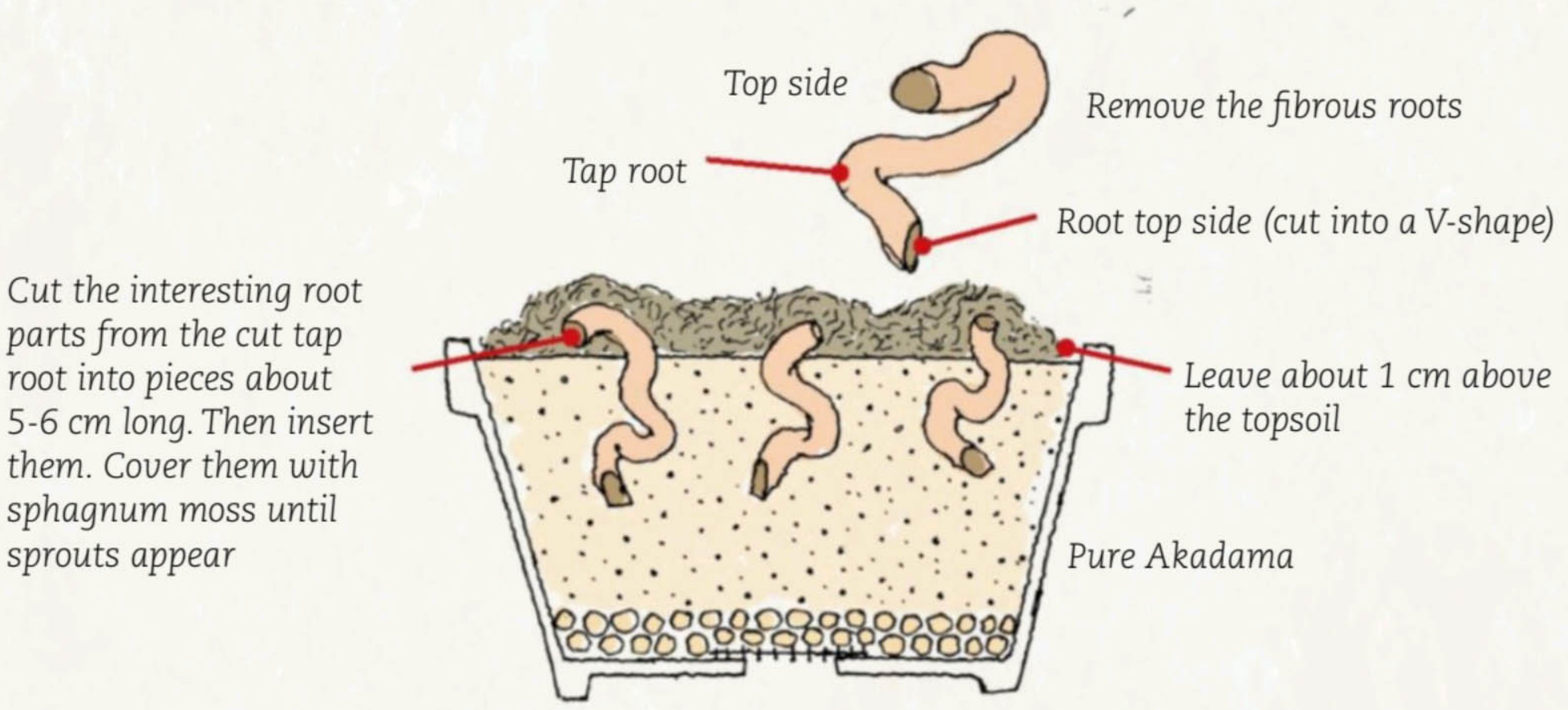
Care of a seedling

Training tree 6-7 years old from seedling.
Three seedlings remain from nearly 10. Each of the remaining seedling has had its trunk trimmed 1-3 times.

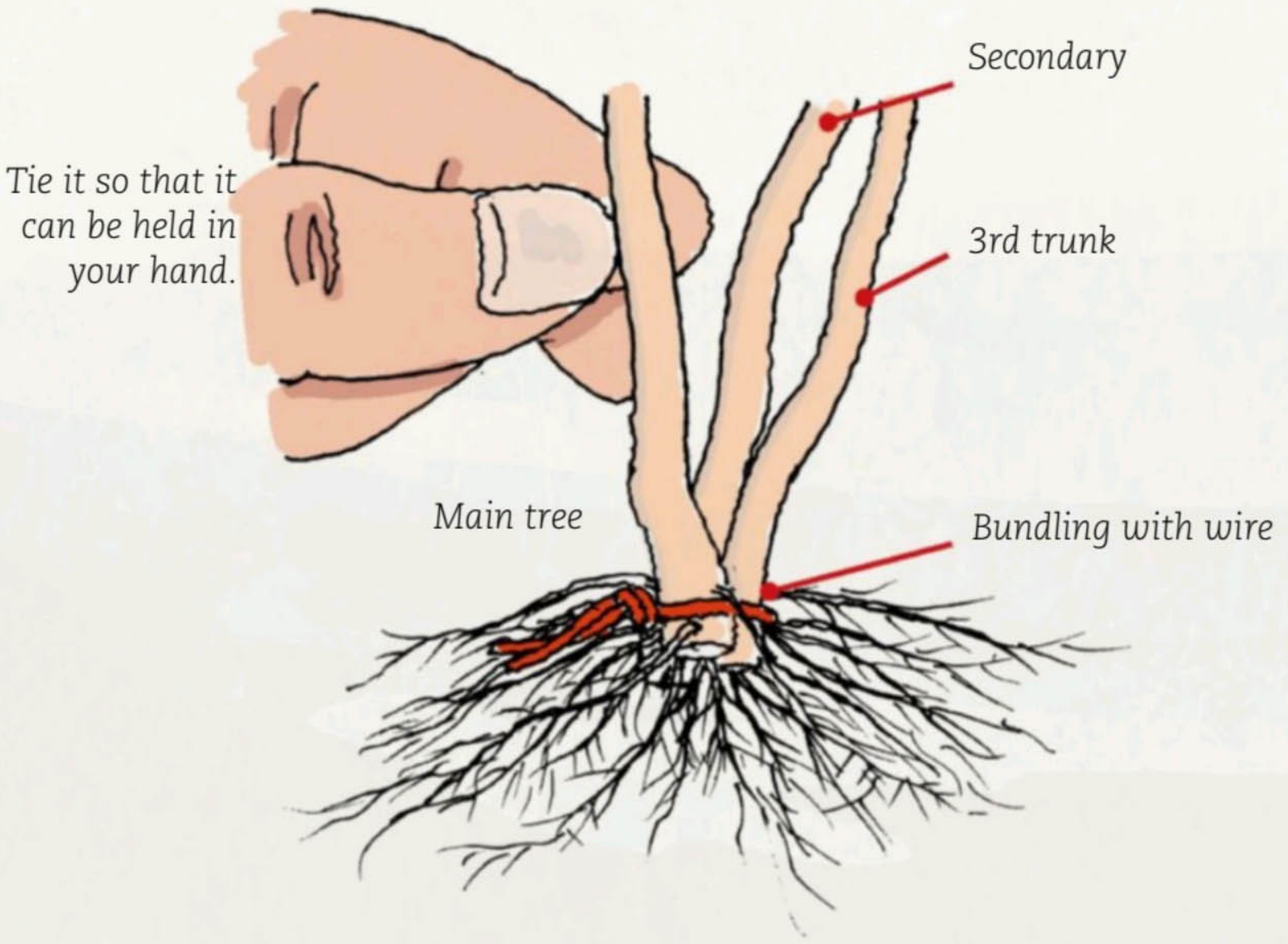

Trim using the scalene triangle as a guide
Pruning: Cut long branches short
Root of main tree
Cut the thick tap root
Root of secondary tree
Level of the soil
Cut the tap root here
Main tree
Secondary tree
Level of the soil
The roots of the third trunk
When the tap root has been cut, a large part of the roots is removed
3rd trunk
After cutting the roots

There are no bends in the trunks, so not very interesting when planted individually. We could consider leaving them as they are, but let's take them apart and plant them again. Try moving the roots closer together after some work on the roots has been done

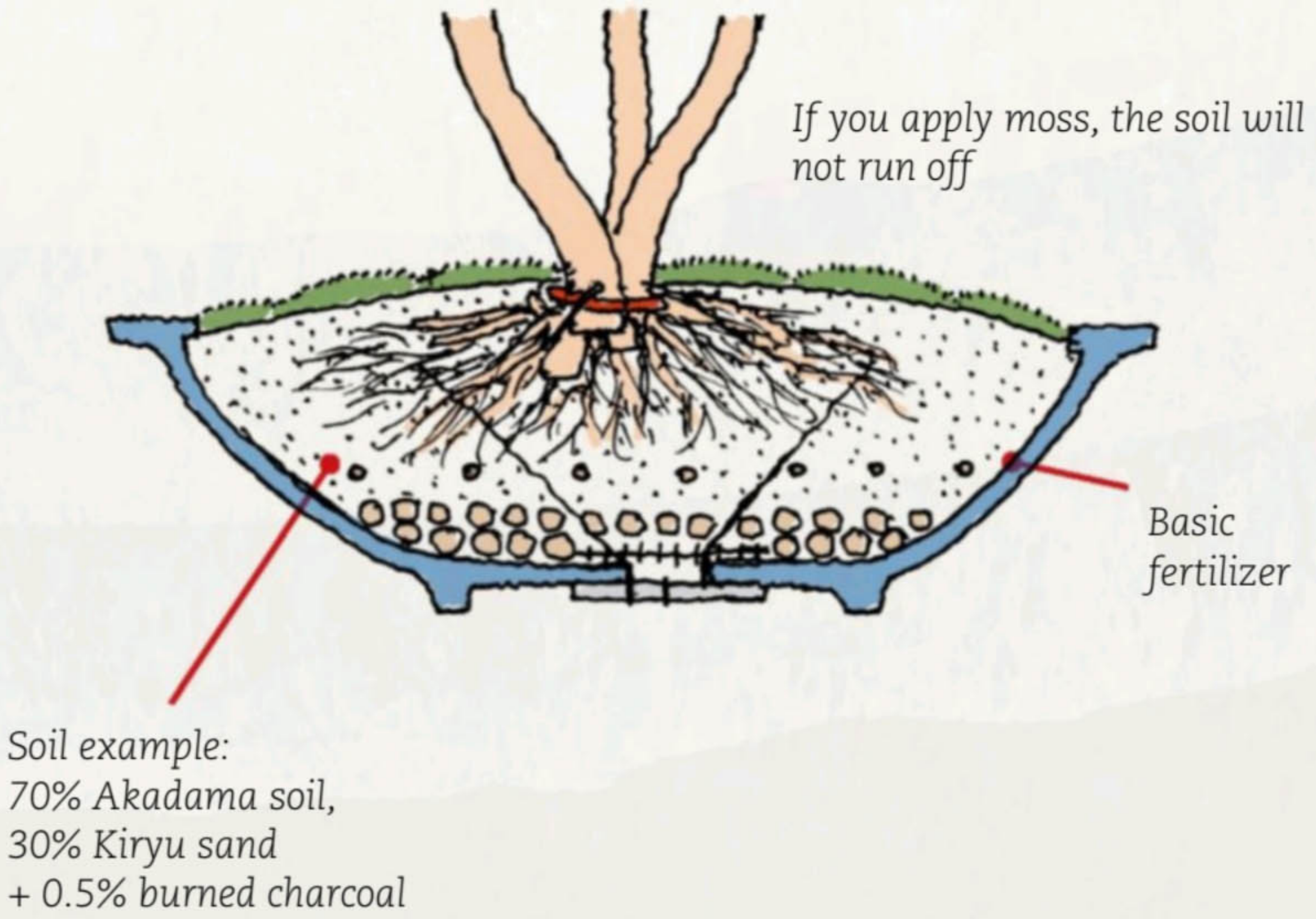
How to make cuttings from the leftover roots


Top side
Remove the fibrous roots
Tap root
Root top side (cut into a V-shape)
Cut the interesting root parts from the cut tap root into pieces about 5-6 cm long. Then insert them. Cover them with sphagnum moss until sprouts appear
Leave about 1 cm above the topsoil
Pure Akadama

How to position


Secondary
Tie it so that it can be held in your hand.
3rd trunk
Main tree
Bundling with wire

How to plant

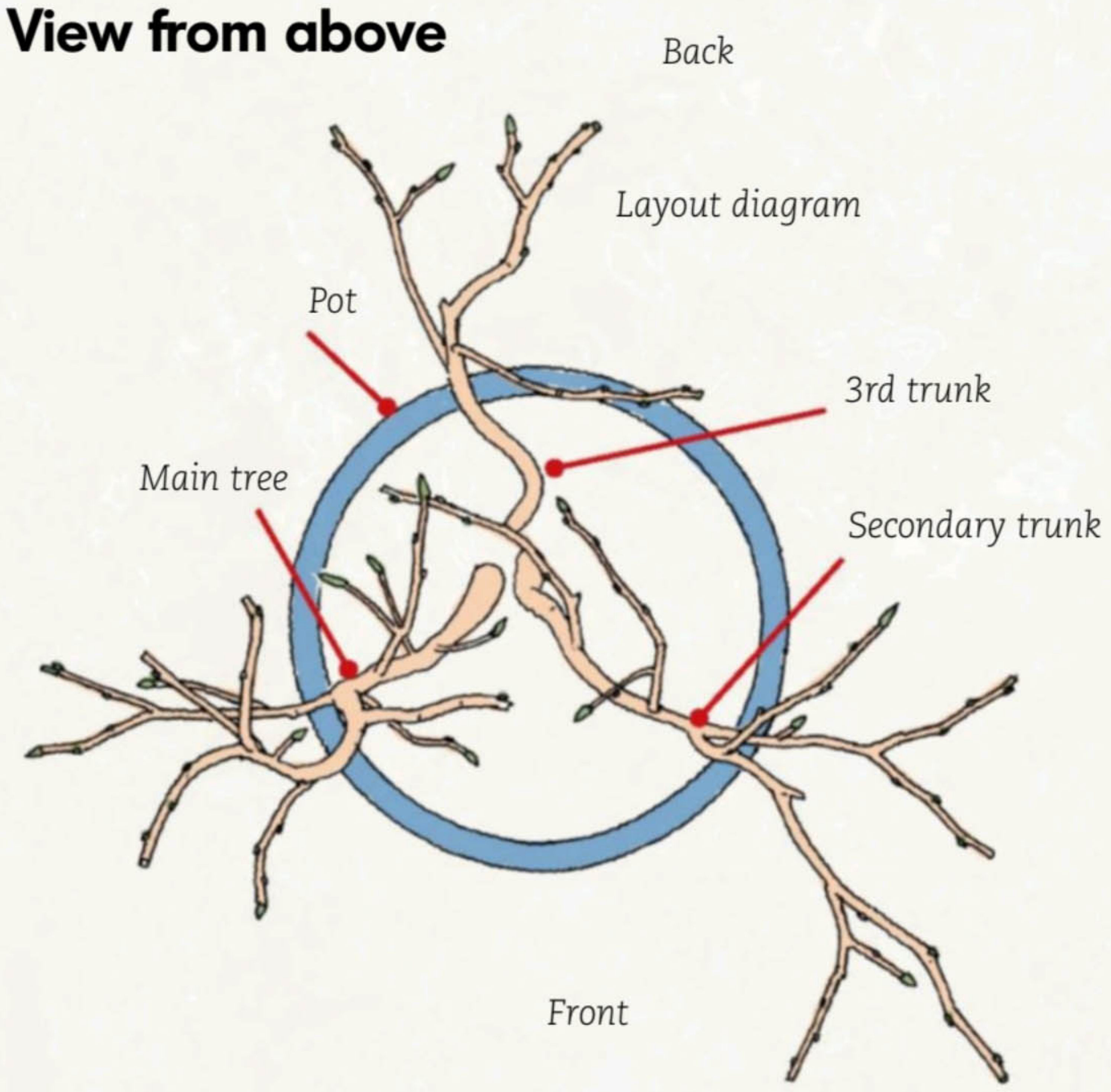

If you apply moss, the soil will not run off
Basic fertilizer
Soil example:
70% Akadama soil,
30% Kiryu sand
+ 0.5% burned charcoal

Characteristics and points to appreciate

A tall deciduous tree from the genus *Diospyros* in the family *Ebenaceae*. Native to China, it is said to have been introduced to Japan around the time of World War II, and does not have a long history as a garden tree or bonsai. It is known by many names, such as Rouagaki (old crow persimmon), Okina persimmon, Hime persimmon, and also theTsukubanegaki (claw-winged persimmon), but in the bonsai world it is often known as the Rouyagaki (old grandfather persimmon). Small, white, urn-shaped flowers bloom in April and May.

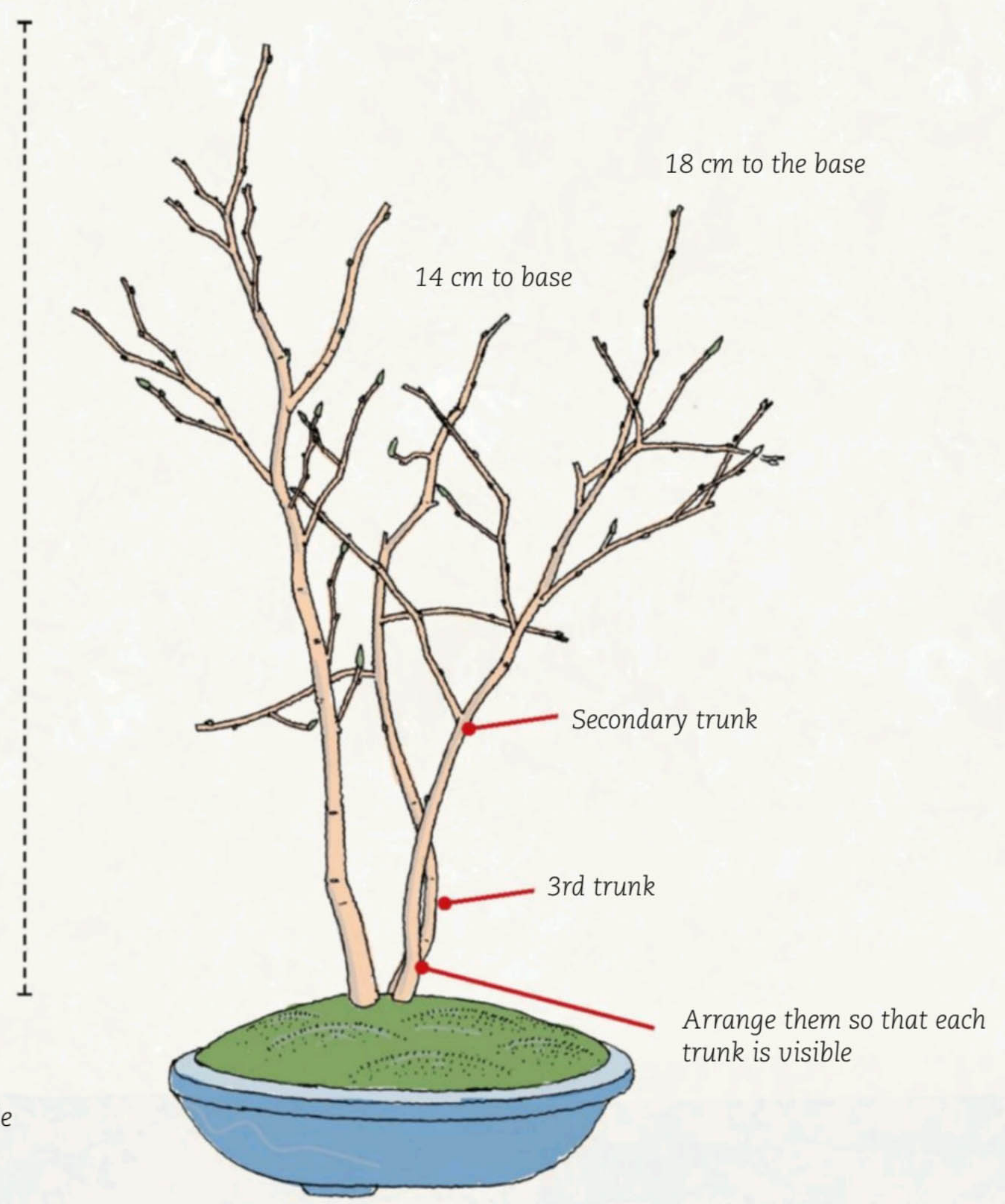
Royagaki is dioecious, and only female trees bear fruit. Female flowers have large calyxes, so it is easy to distinguish between males and females if the tree is in bloom. If you place a male tree nearby during the flowering season, it will bear fruit through natural mating, but if you want to ensure that the tree bears fruit, you should perform artificial mating. There are many varieties of Royagaki, and some with bisexual flower characteristics, only bearing fruit on female trees. When obtaining materials, be sure to check whether it is necessary to distinguish between males and females and whether mating is necessary. The orange to red fruits are about 2 cm in size, relatively small for a type of persimmon, but the appeal is that you can enjoy fruiting for a long time, even after the leaves have fallen. Another reason why it is popular as a bonsai is that it can be pruned finely for a real bonsai.

View from above


Back
Layout diagram
Pot
3rd trunk
Main tree
Secondary trunk
Front

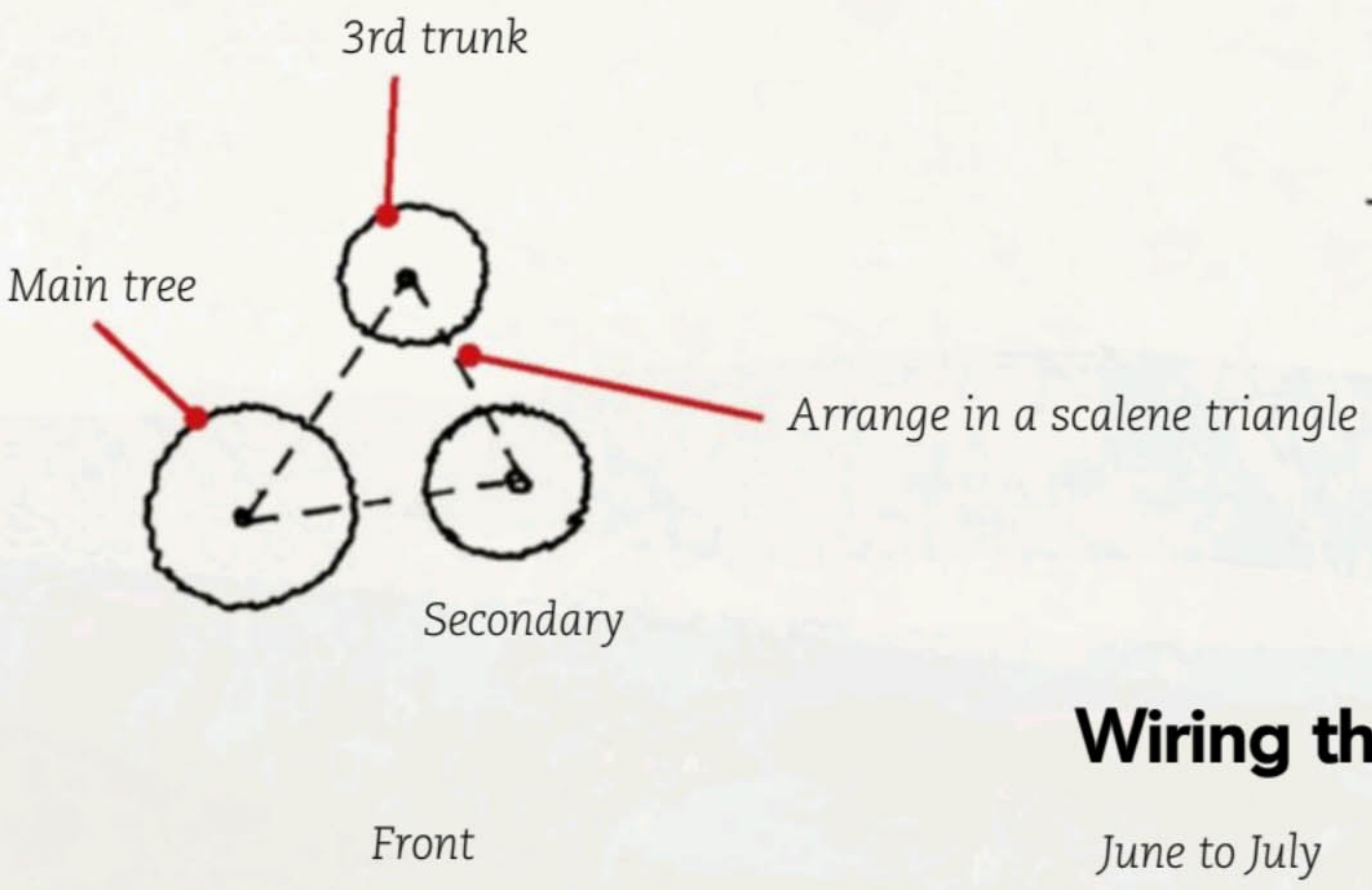
After planting

Even if a single tree doesn't look very good, planting three of them together makes it more attractive


21 cm to base
18 cm to the base
14 cm to base
Secondary trunk
3rd trunk

Arrange them so that each trunk is visible

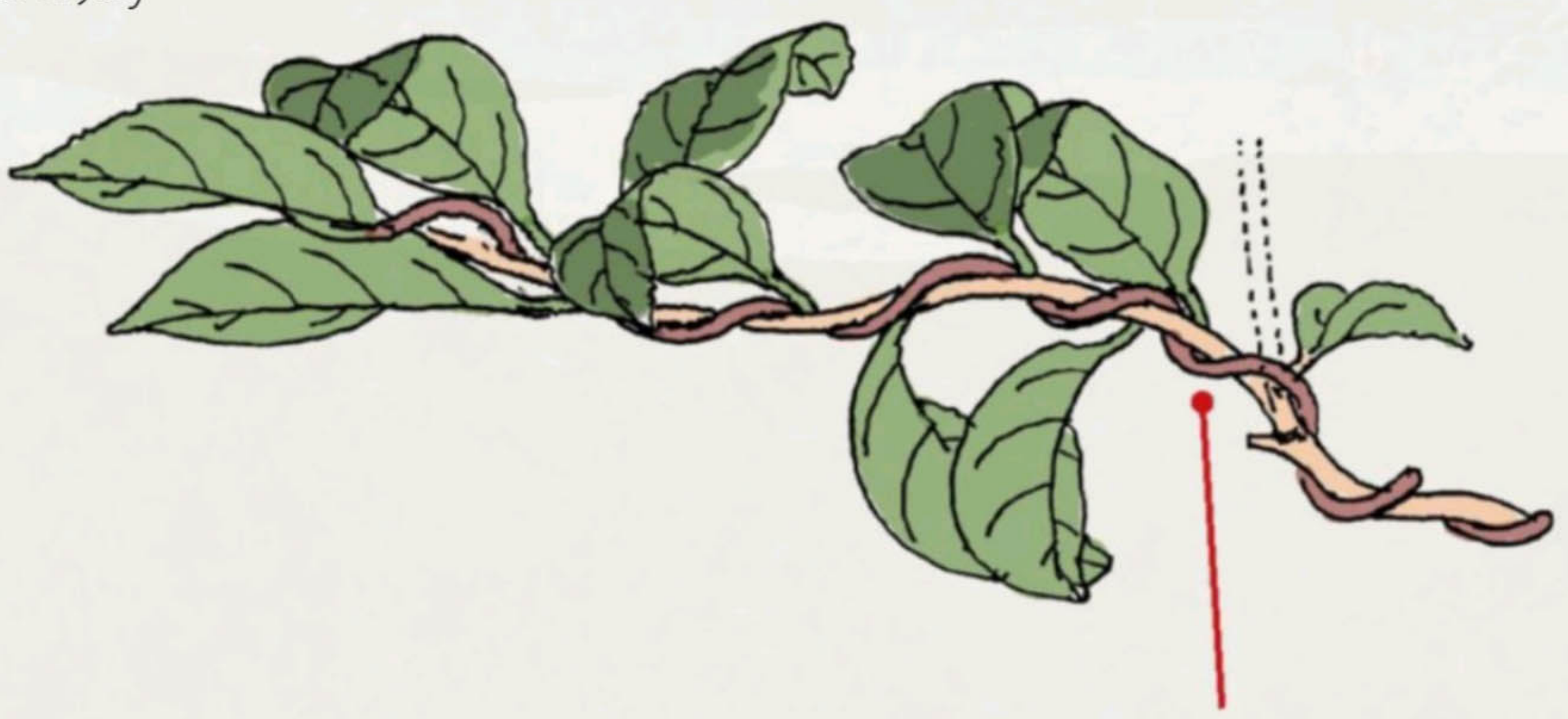
Arrangement of trunks


3rd trunk
Main tree
Secondary
Front

Arrange in a scalene triangle

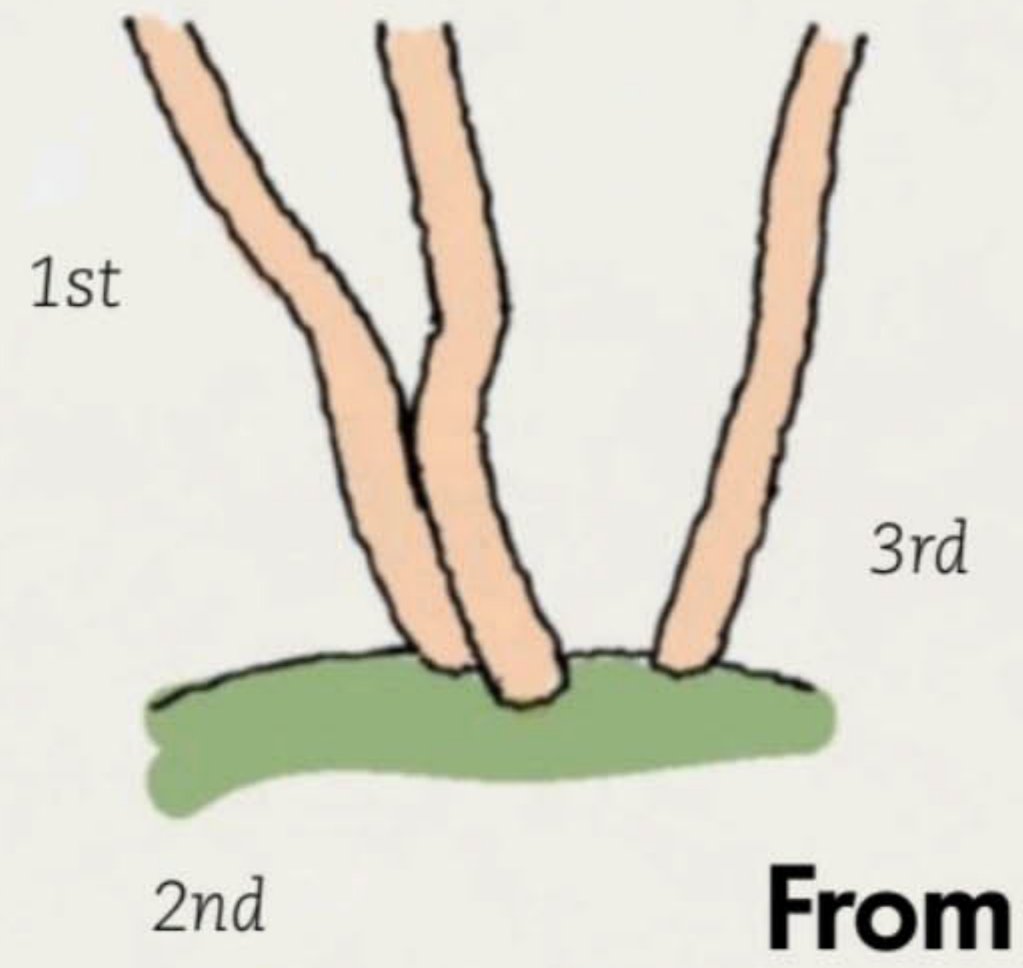
Wiring the branches

June to July

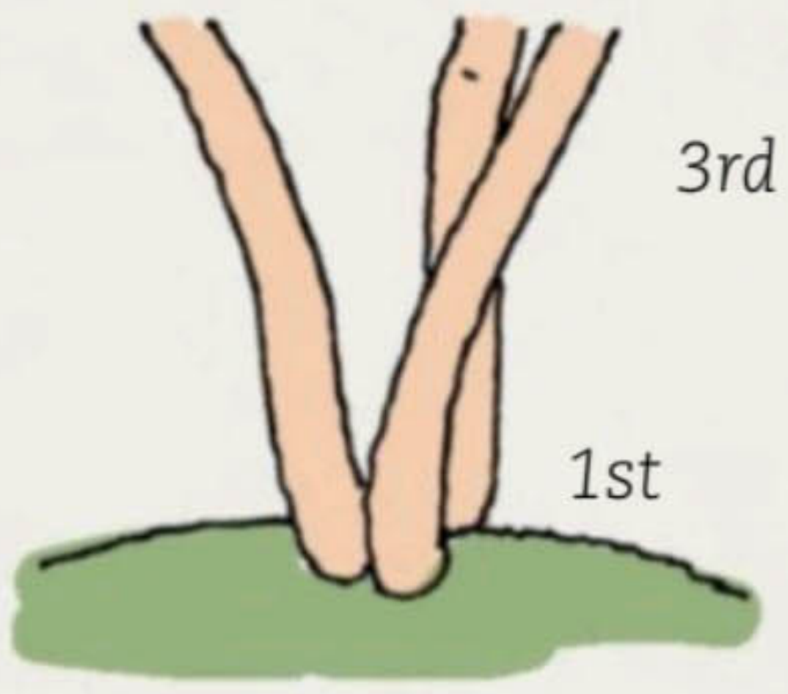


Wire the vertically-growing branches and position them in a downward direction

Layout seen from the right side

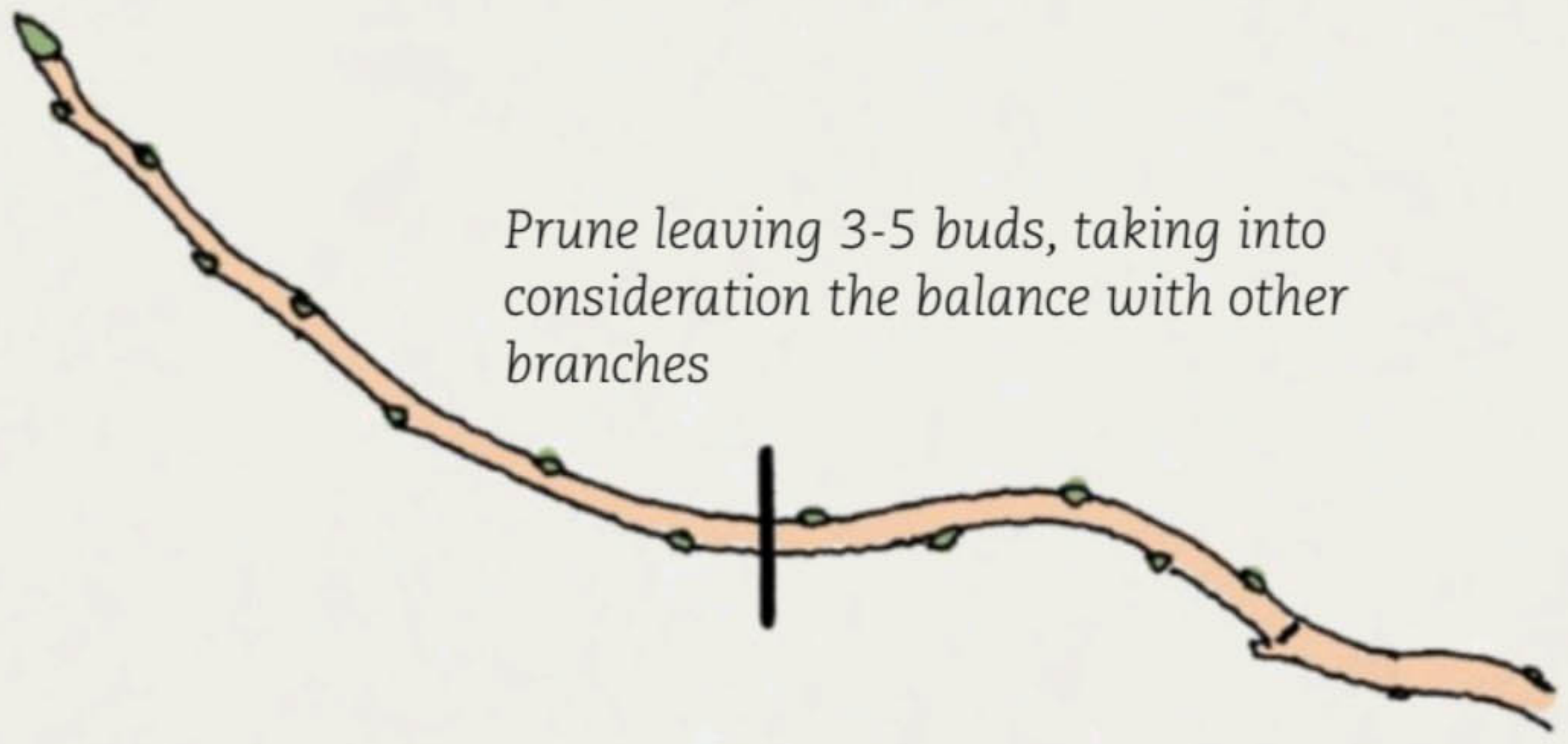


From the back



Pruning

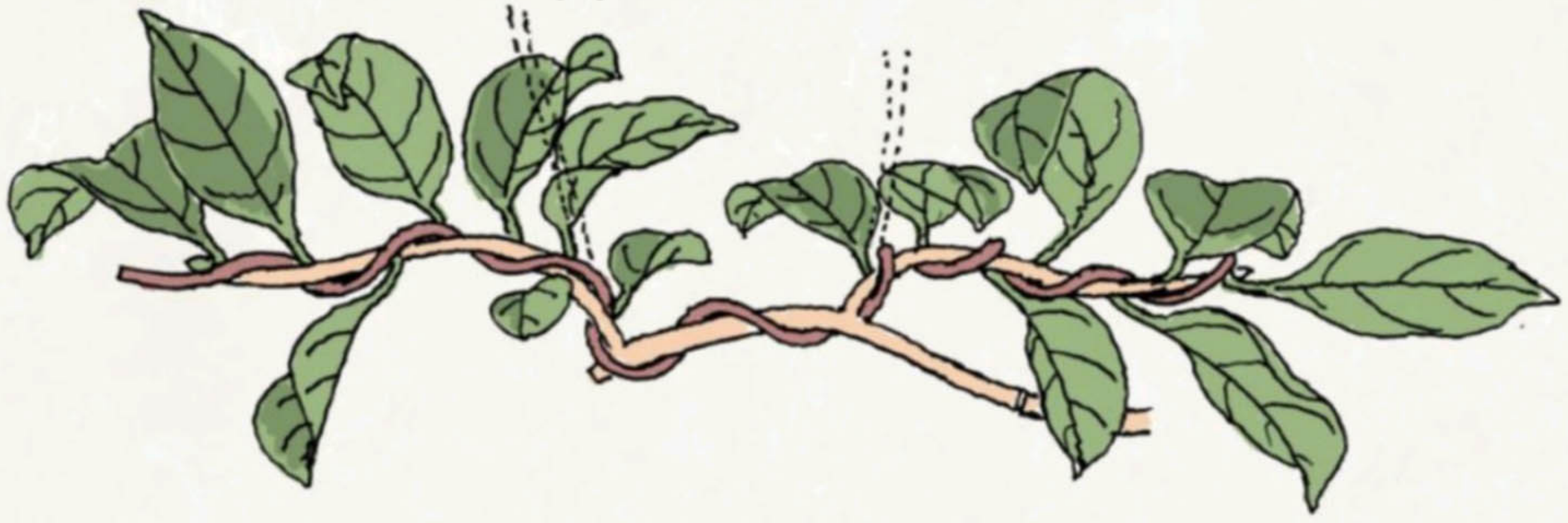
During dormancy



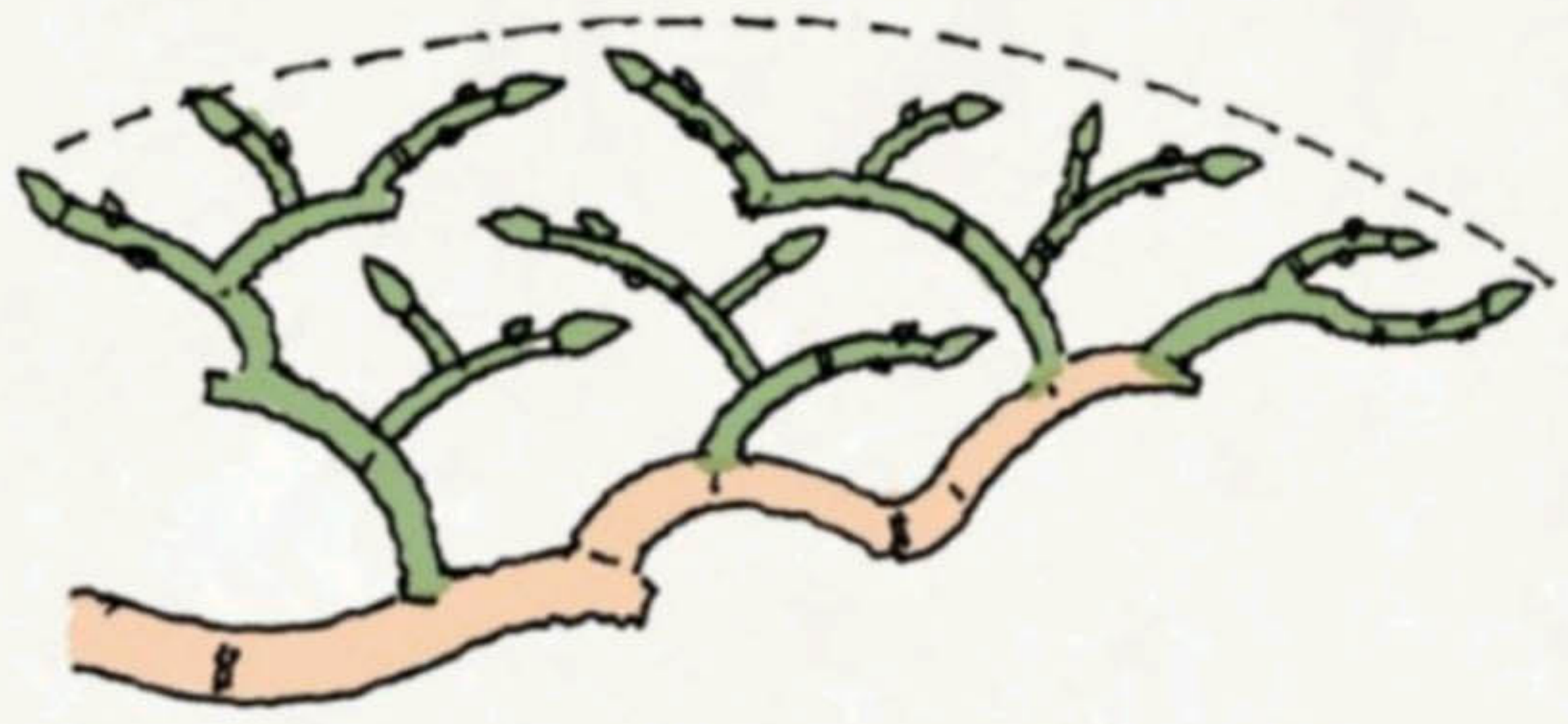
Prune leaving 3-5 buds, taking into consideration the balance with other branches

Positioning of the side twigs

June to July


Keep the upward growing twigs face down

Shape of the branch


Create an arched foliage pad

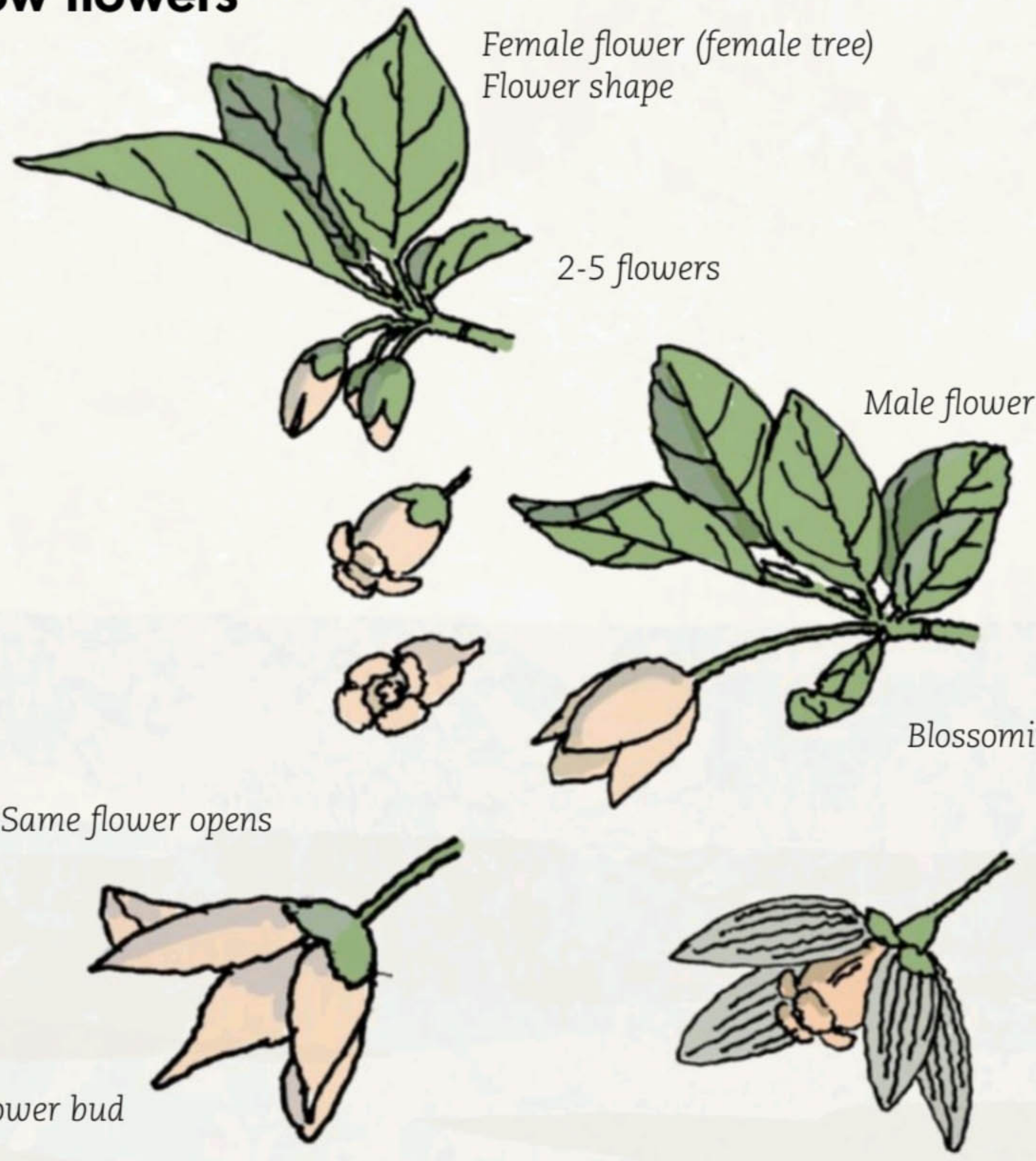
How to develop fine branching

This tree species sprouts vigorously, and repeated pruning will result in finely loosened branches, but this type of work will not allow the trunk or branches to thicken. For young trees that you want to thicken, let the branches grow long and elongated to encourage this. For trees that have reached the stage of creating small branches, repeatedly prune off new shoot buds to achieve a fine branching.

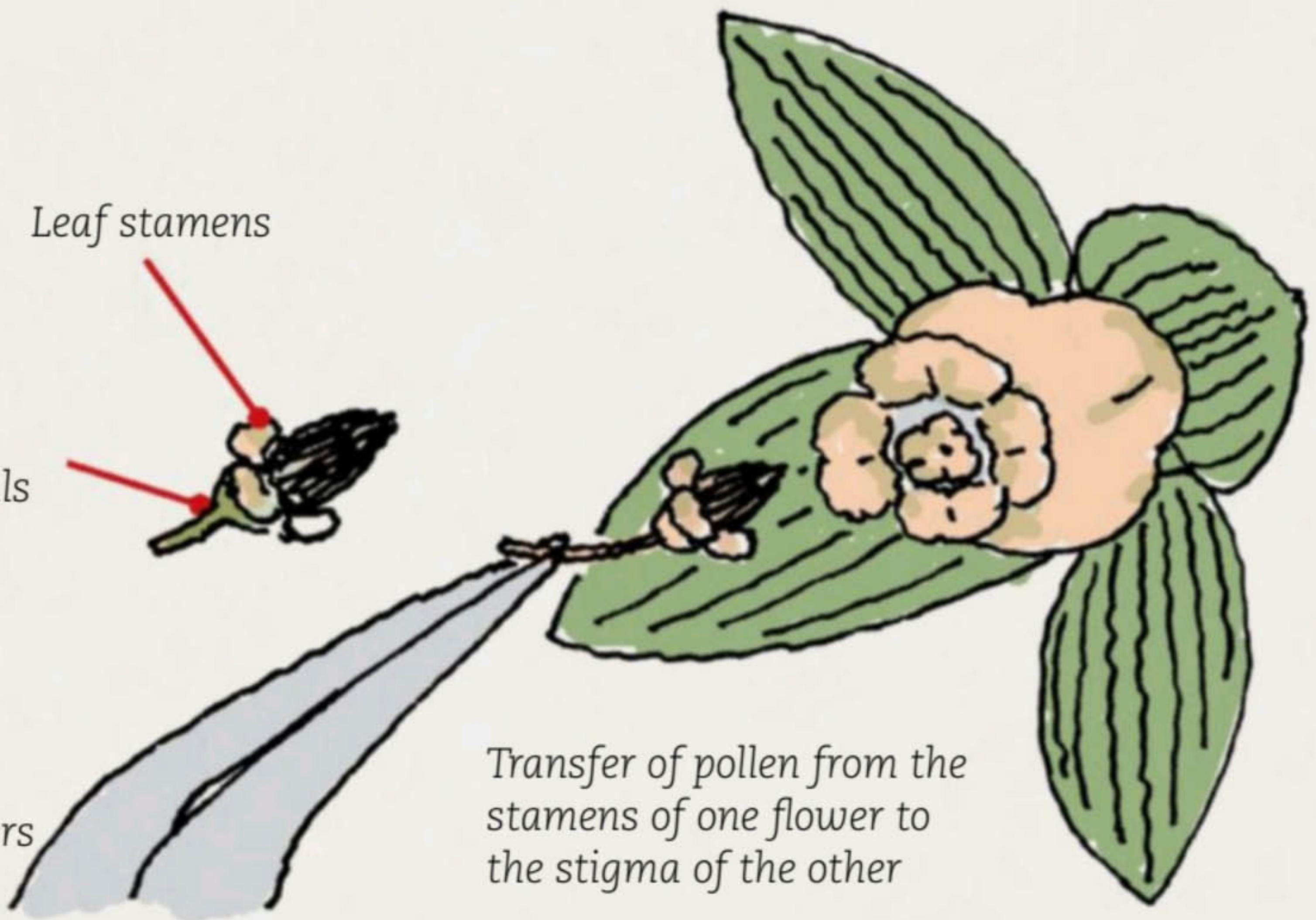
The best time to wire the new shoots is in May or June when they are still soft. Bend them carefully from the base to shape them. Wiring will become less effective on branches with a woodier tissue, or as they get older, so it is best to complete the work before the new shoots harden. Pruning after June is likely to result in the loss of flower buds, so if you want to enjoy fruiting, you should refrain from pruning after June.

How to grow flowers

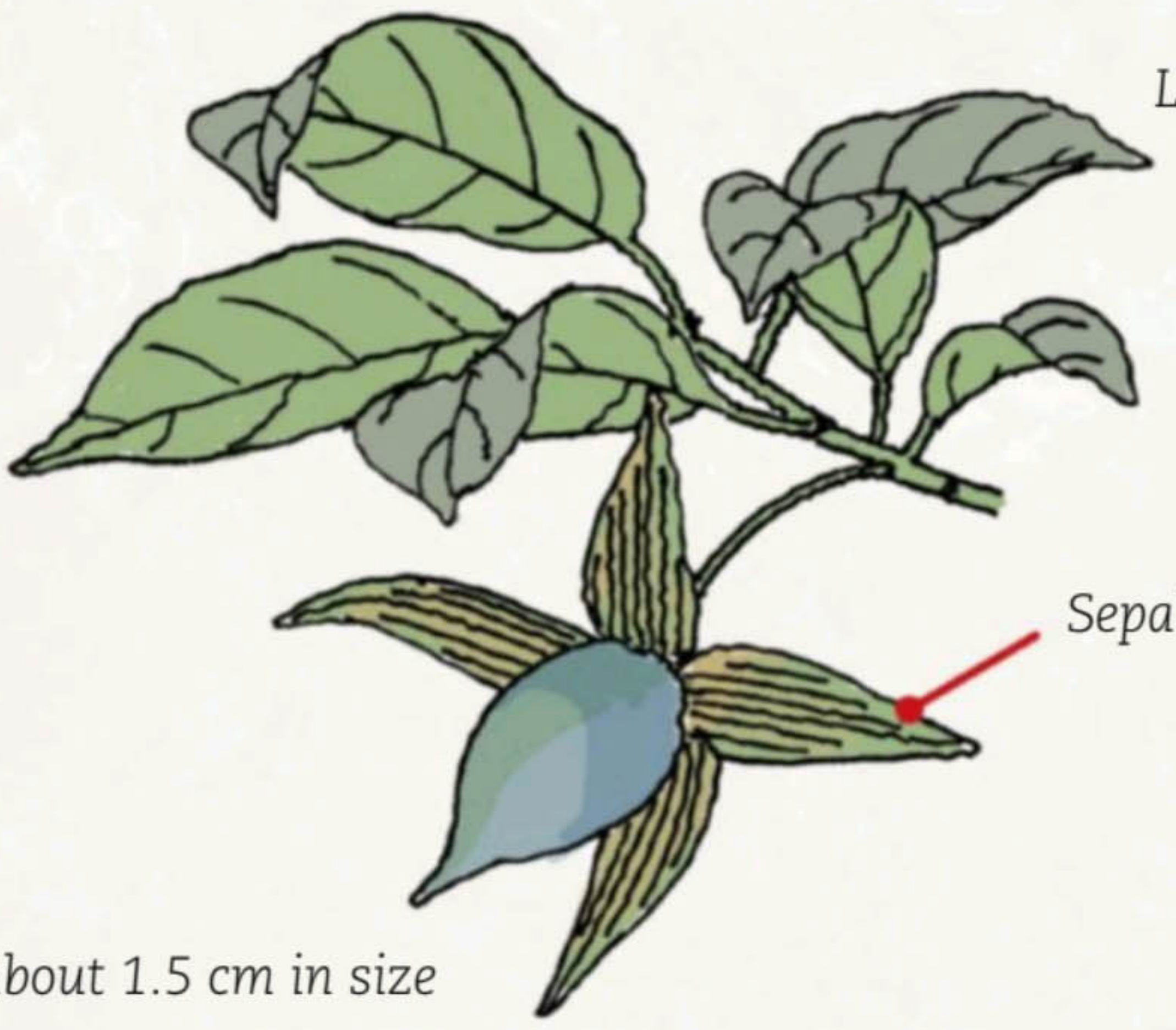
April to May


Female flower (female tree)
Flower shape
2-5 flowers
Male flower (male tree)
Blossoming flower
Same flower opens
Flower bud
The four sepals open
A pod-shaped flower opens

Cross pollination


Leaf stamens
Cut the petals
Tweezers
Transfer of pollen from the stamens of one flower to the stigma of the other

How the fruit grows



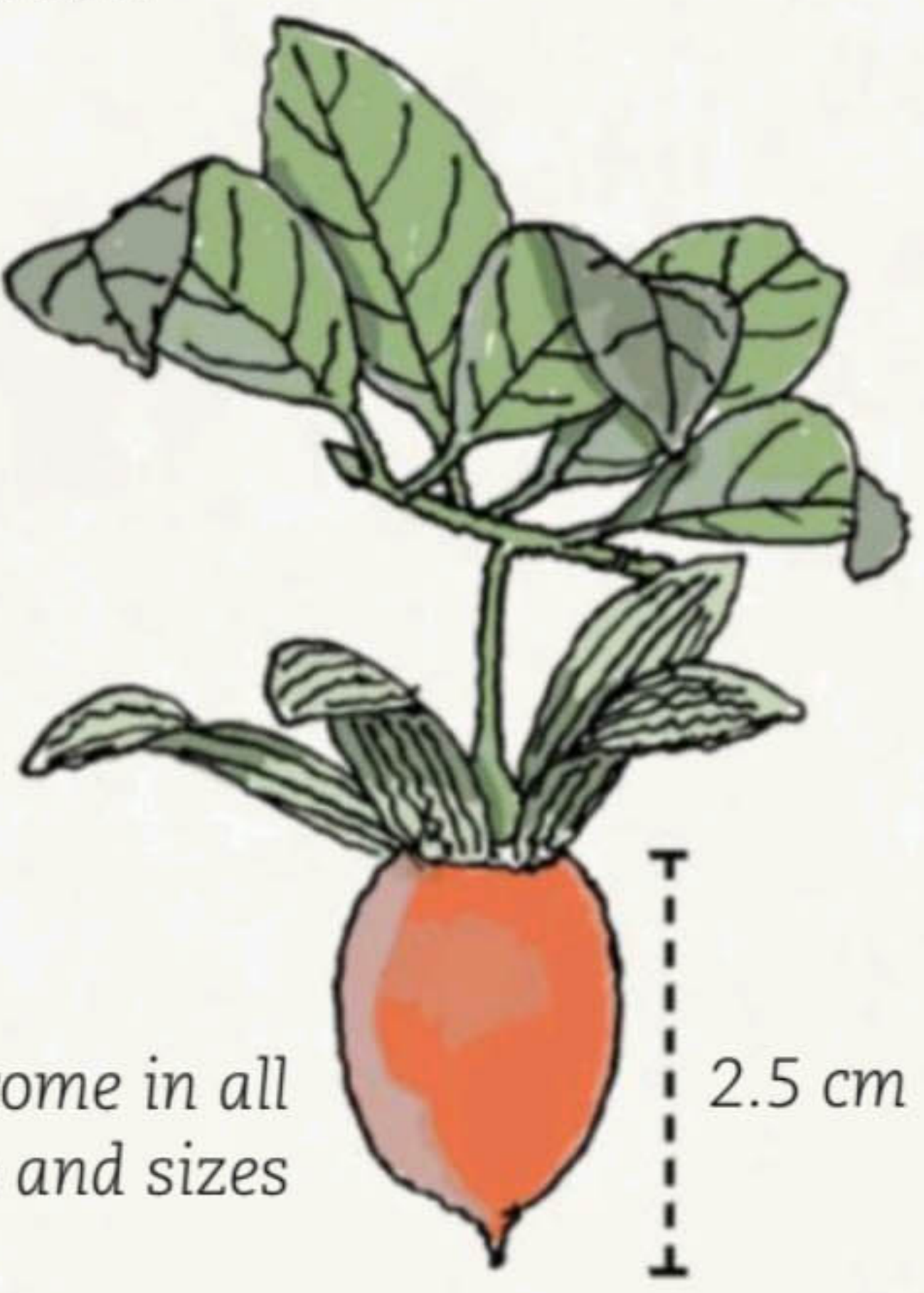
Late May

Sepals

Blue fruit about 1.5 cm in size

Fruiting

October to November

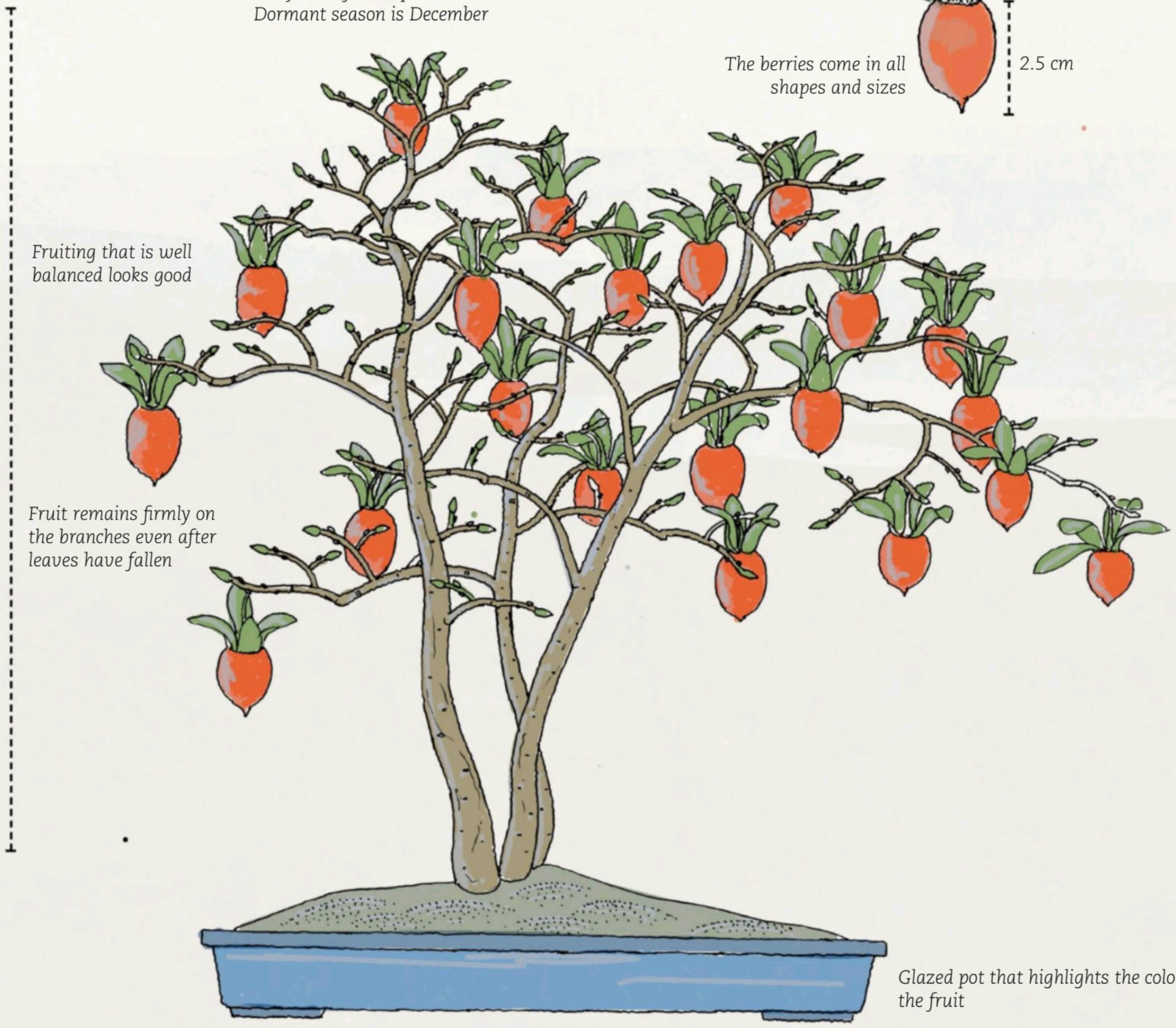


The berries come in all shapes and sizes

2.5 cm

Tree with fruit

6-7 years after acquisition. Dormant season is December



28 cm to base

Fruiting that is well balanced looks good

Fruit remains firmly on the branches even after leaves have fallen

Glazed pot that highlights the colour of the fruit

The 2nd edition Kifu Awards '25

A non-profit, annual, international web competition

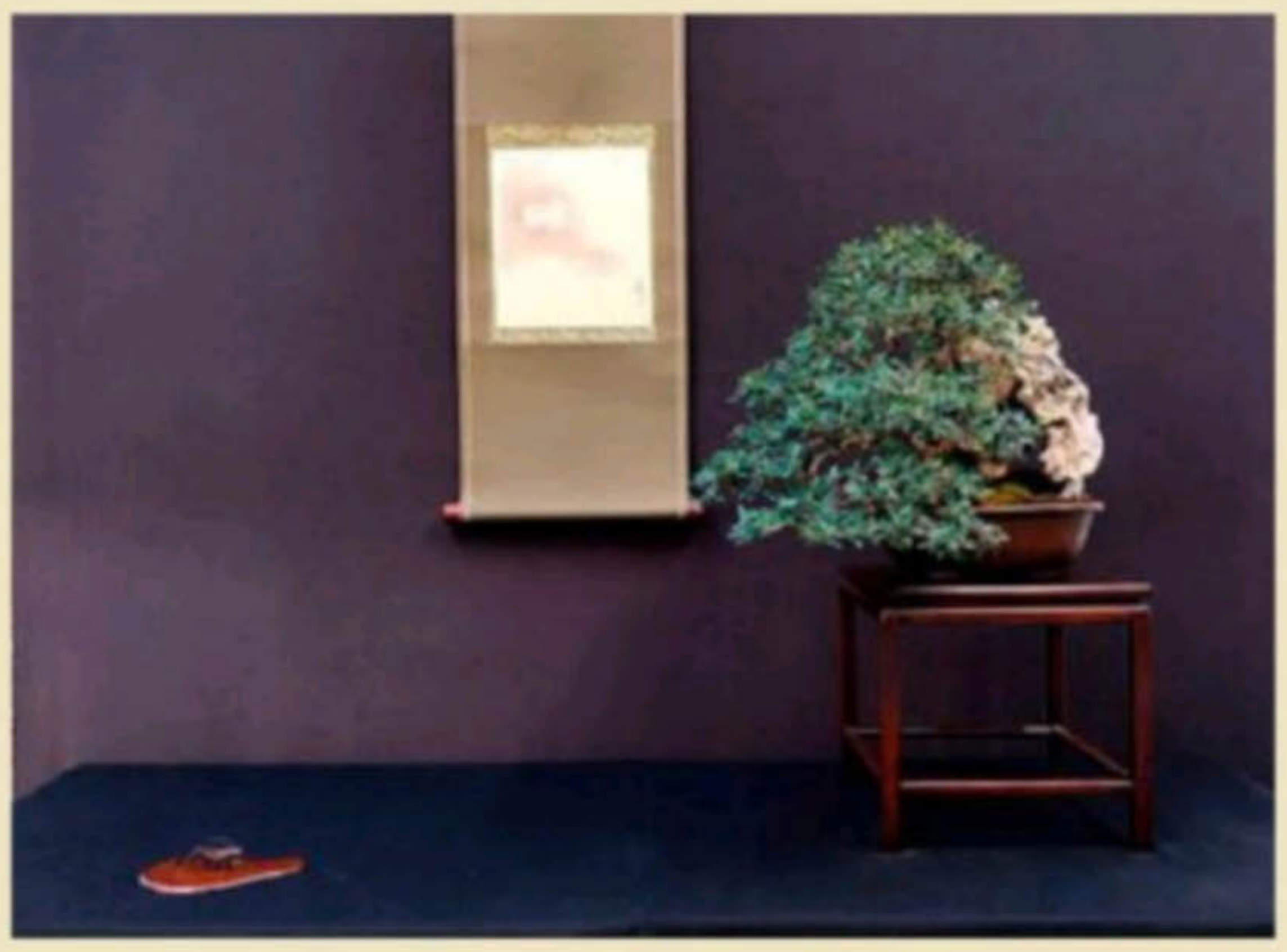
By Gaetano Conte

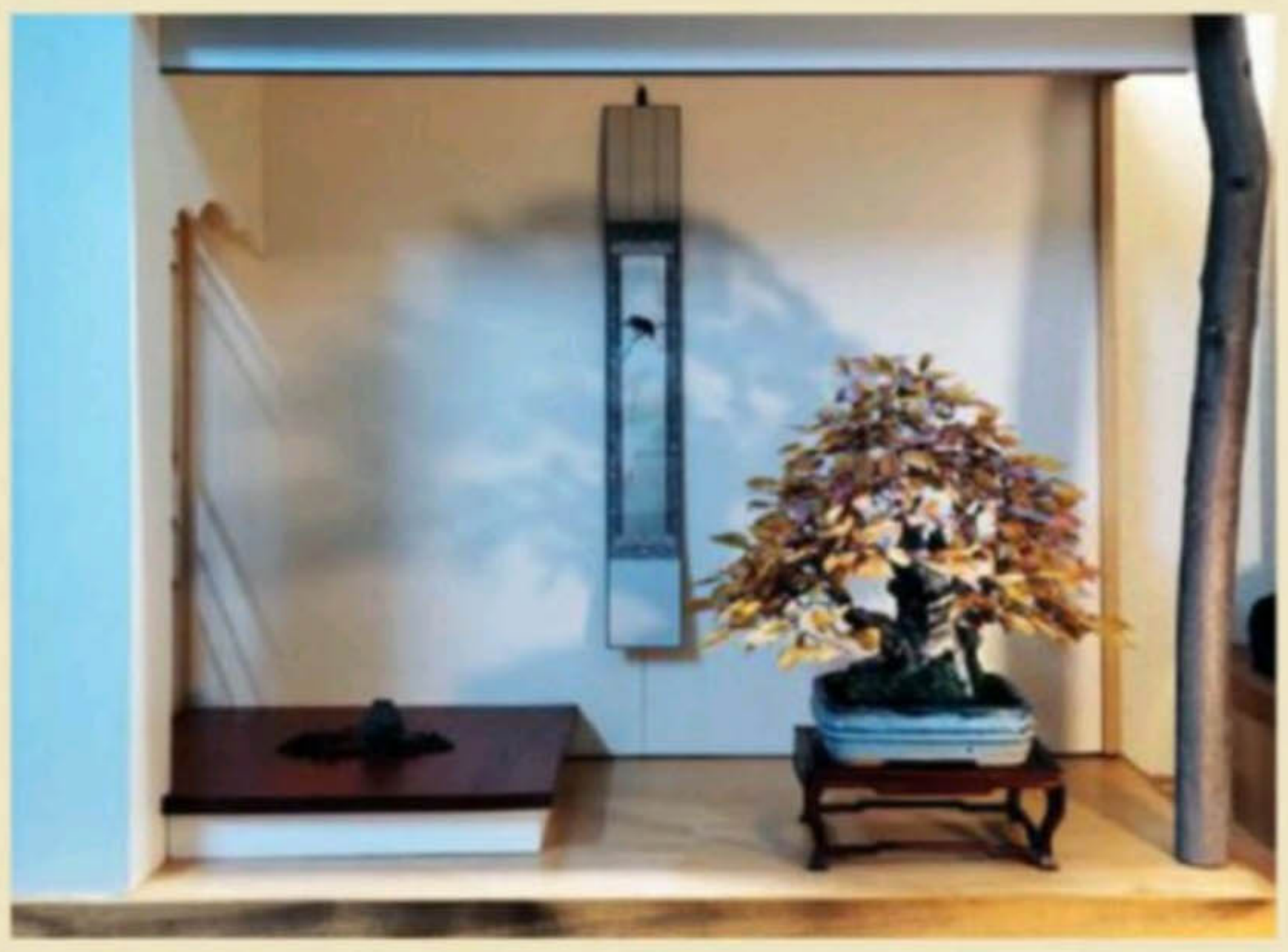
A kifu, or 'kifuu', can be translated as 'precious style' or 'jewel bonsai', which indicates it has the strong personality of a chuhin and the perfection of a shohin.

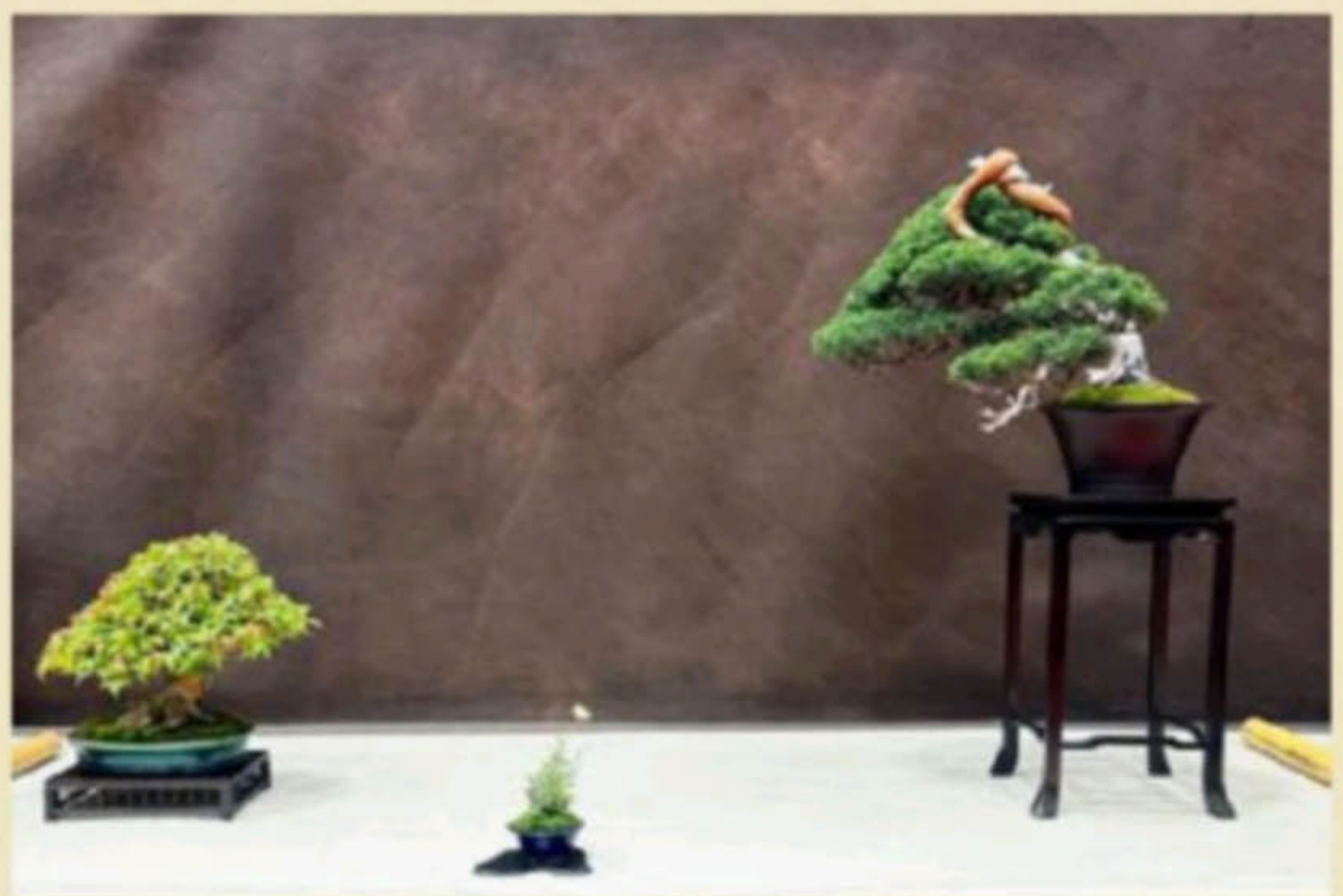
The contest is totally free and it is also non-profit making. The four judges, highly-qualified bonsai Masters are: Bjorn Bjorholm, Alessandro Bonardo, Francesco Forno, Fabrizio Zorzi. and David Ruiz (photo).
The prizes were awarded based on the three categories: conifers, evergreens and deciduous trees.
The winners are:

1st place Conifers:
Juniperus itoigawa by F. Pappalardo
1st place Evergreens
Olea sylvestris by L. Monni
1st place Deciduous
Carpinus coreana by A. Geraci

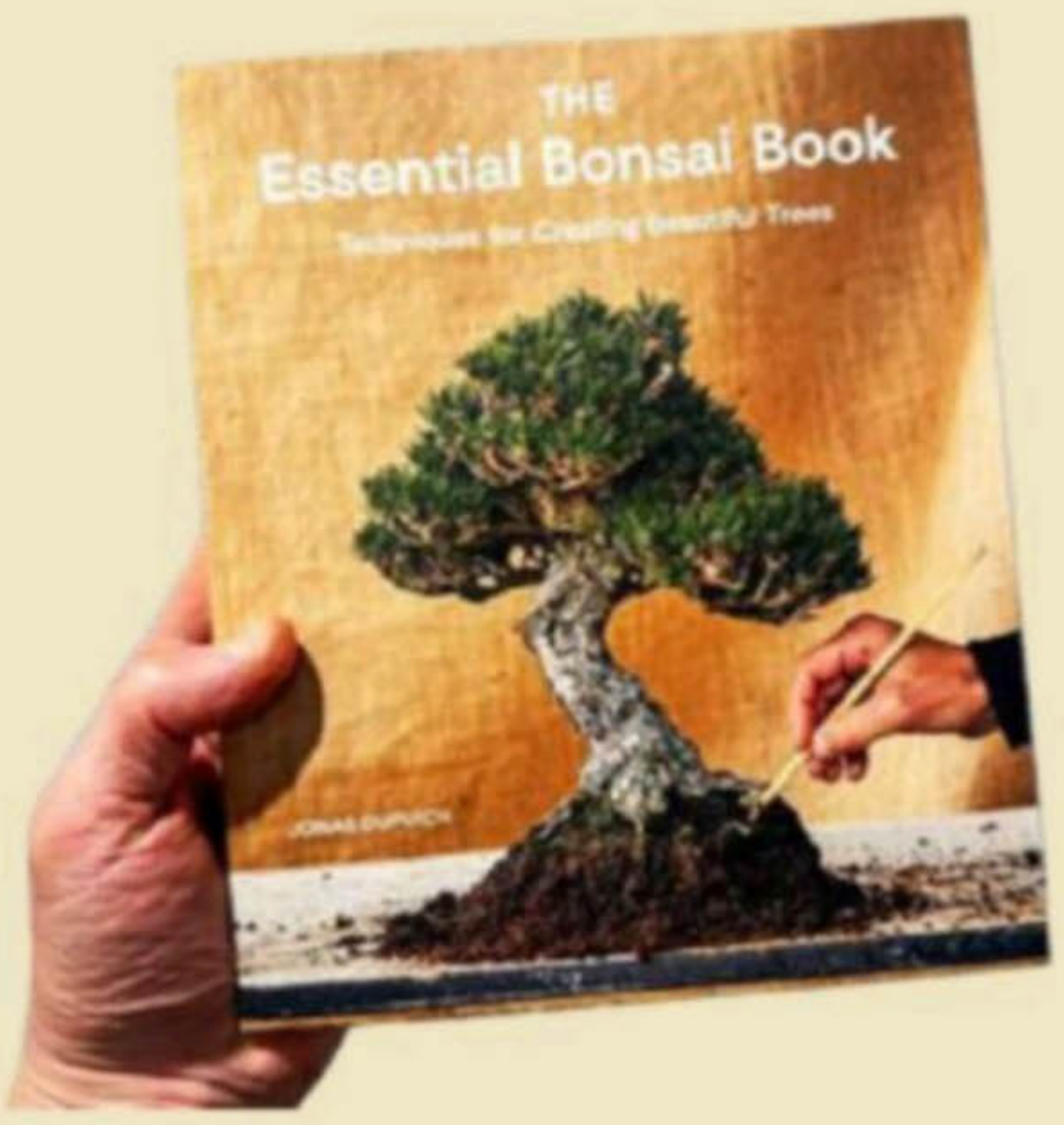
Registrations for the next edition are open until autumn 2025. Send a photo of the bonsai with a minimum set-up and a video certifying the height of the plant. An optional video of the plant can be included in the set-up, as explained in the dedicated area on the site. To watch the videos of the winning displays, or the permanent exhibition, go to the website, or follow us on social media.
www.kifubonsaiawards.com


Olea sylvestris *by L. Monni*


Carpinus coreano *by A. Geraci*


Juniperus itoigawa *by F. Pappalardo*

New book by Jonas Dupuich



On April 15 The Essential Bonsai Book was released. A beautifully photographed, in-depth guide to fundamental techniques for creating exquisite bonsai, by Jonas Dupuich, the author of The Little Book of Bonsai and the Bonsai Tonight blog. A goal-based approach to creating, maintaining, and developing bonsai in any growing environment.

Publisher Ten Speed Press, Photography David Fenton, 224 pages, paperback, 280 colour photos, English. Order at:
www.penguinrandomhouse.com or store.bonsaitonight.com

7-9 June, Bonsai-Team Bonn
22nd Bonsai open-air exhibition of the Bonsai Team Bonn in the Japanese Garden.
Where: *Japanese Garden, Rheinaue, Petra-Kelly-Allee, 53175 Bonn, Germany* ***Info:*** *H-J Fröhlich, Bonsai-Team Bonn Tel: 02224-900166*

12-14 September, Crespi Cup 2025
Exhibition, demonstrations and Japanese culture, guest speakers: Takahiro Kato, Masayuki Fujikawa, Nobuyuki Kajiwara, Takako Fujikawa. ***Where:*** *Crespi Bonsai, S.S. Sempione, 35 20015 San Lorenzo di Parabiago (Mi) Italy.*
Info: *www.crespieditori.com/crespi_cup/*

13-14 September, 9th US National Bonsai Exhibition
Exhibition, demonstrations and trade fair
Where: *Total Sports Experience Arena, 435 West Commercial Street, East Rochester, New York, US.*

13-14 September,
Bayerische Bonsaitage '25
Exhibition, demonstrations and trade fair. Saturday and Sunday from 10-16 hours
Where: *Paul-Metz-Halle, 90513 Zirndorf, Germany*

18-26 October, The 30th Hwa Fong National Show & World Bonsai Friendship Federation
Where: *Pingtung County, Taiwan*

28- 31st August 2026, 10th world Bonsai Convention
Where: *Pavilion Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.*
Info: *www.malaysiabonsaisuiseki.com*

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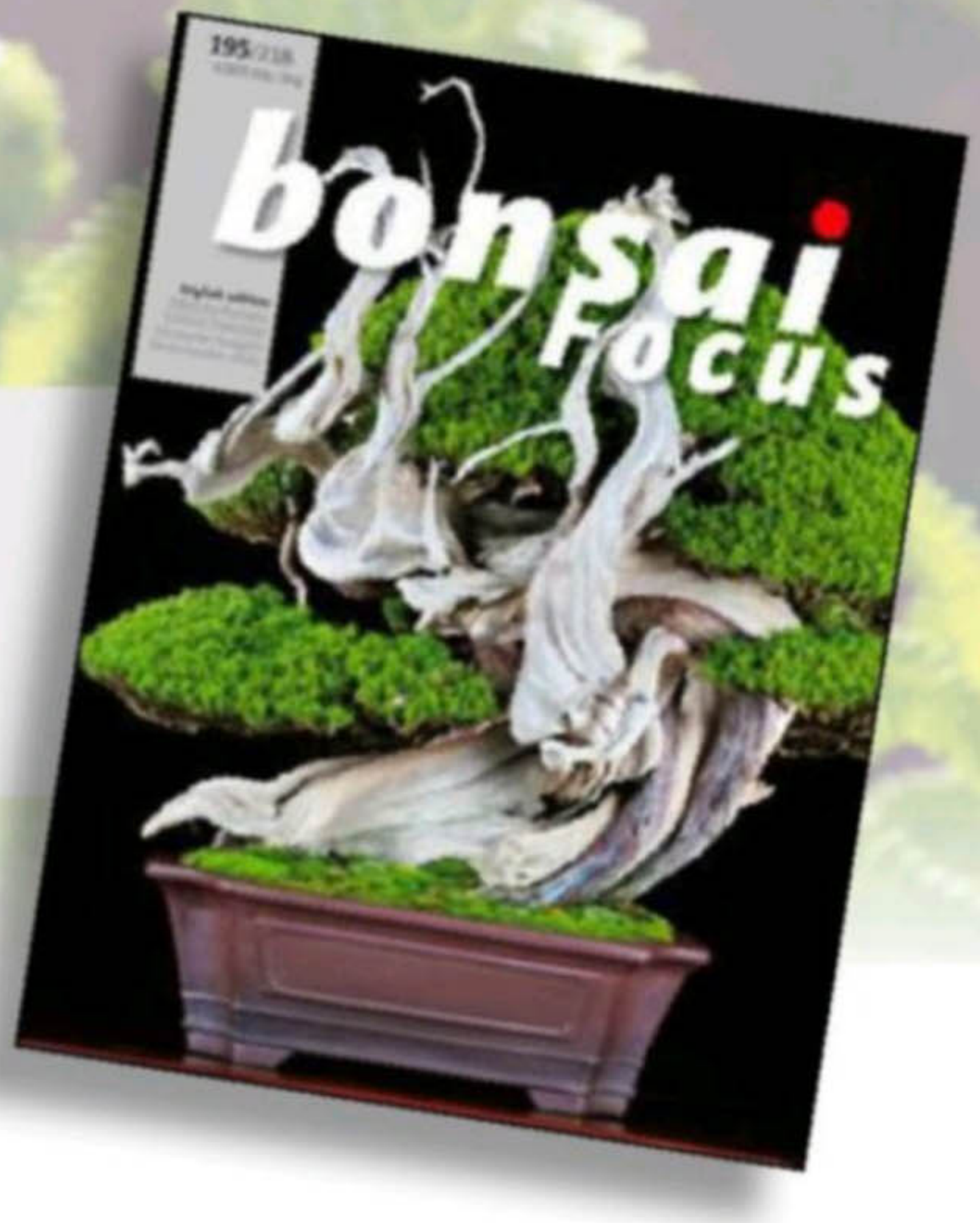

Lots to do

Yusei Sasaki thought that, by simply changing the angle of his juniper it would be enough to improve it. However, it took so much more than that . . .

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Techniques for a maple

Ayumu Fukano guides you through the techniques of refining mountain maples.

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